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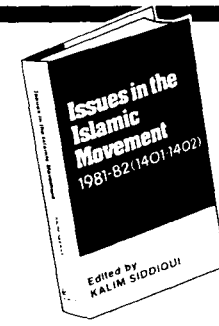

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Janette Turner Hospital

Ashes to Ashes

CORPSES, that is the answer. Corpses are my future, thought Krishnankutty with elation and smiled upon his bride Saraswathi as they exchanged the garlands of flowers. She was dazzled by the light of his destiny. It is love, she thought, for she had a college degree in English literature and was an avid reader of Barbara Cartland, Victoria Holt, and other English novelists circulated in paperback among the well-educated and well-born young women of Trivandrum. She recognised the bold and dark passion of the foreign-returned man and quivered with delicious fear.

Krishnankutty took it as an auspicious sign. Corpses, he saw unmistakably, were his *karma* and his fortune. He had experienced a moment of enlightenment and she had perceived it. After the tying of the *tali* they held hands in an ecstasy of mutual misunderstanding. They had seen each other only once before, in the presence of others, and neither had been displeased with the paternal choice, but nor had either expected such incandescence. It was the prelude to a night of passion. Krishnankutty had read the *Kama Sutra* while he was a graduate student at M.I.T.—it had been lent to him by his American friend John in a paperback English translation—and that night he laid claim to his Indian heritage. Saraswathi, who had never heard of the *Kama Sutra*, felt that the glorious mysteries of American sex had been revealed to her.

In the morning he told her his plan. It had come to him, he said, at the instant he had seen her face framed by the bridal garment of jasmine. His American education and his Indian nationalism had merged with the nuptial embrace, and the idea of the electric crematorium had been conceived. It would be the first in the state of Kerala, perhaps the first south of Bombay (though he suspected there was already one in Madras), and certainly one of the few in the whole country.

On the way to the wedding, the groom's party had crossed paths with a funeral procession. The bier was thickly flower-strewn, and even the bearers, carrying it high over their heads, had been weeping. The corpse was that of a beautiful young woman.

Krishnankutty's American friend John—he of the *Kama Sutra* loan—had considered himself fortunate to have his movie camera at the ready, being engaged in recording the procession from the groom's house to that of the bride. In a *frisson* of Eastern excitement anticipating, he felt, the ultimate perfection of *moksha*, he captured forever on the one reel the continuity of life and death. It was just as Hermann Hesse had intimated in *Siddhartha*—a wedding, a funeral, the beggars at the roadside, the lavish silks and jewels of the bridegroom's party, the river of life flowing on, the vast oneness of it all.

But Krishnankutty's mother, Lakshmi, had been aghast at such an inauspicious encounter. Weeping and trembling, she had begged her husband and son to postpone the wedding lest disaster strike the young couple. Krishnankutty, however, with his American education in electrical engineering, was not worried by such things. Was not this *Chingam*, the auspicious month for marriages? And had not the astrologer consulted by the family indicated that this particular hour on this particular day was the auspicious time?

Clearly then some special thing, good rather than evil, would come of the meeting. And so it had been.

The funeral had reminded Krishnankutty of the final rites for his friend John's mother. She had lain in state, surrounded by flowers, in a

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room at the Funeral Home. Krishnankutty had been greatly impressed by the furnishings and wall-to-wall carpet of this room, and by the restrained grief and decorum of the visitors. Later he had marvelled at the quiet simplicity with which, at a certain point in the chapel service at the crematory, the coffin had smoothly rolled out of sight behind a velvet curtain at the unseen touch of a remote control button. The next week he had returned and expressed his professional interest as an electrical engineer. He had requested the management to give him a tour of the crematorium, the discreet workings of which had fascinated him.

Krishnankutty was embarrassed by John's interest in the funeral procession. He strongly suspected that his friend would briefly slip away from the wedding festivities to film the burning of the young girl down on the river bank. He visualised his former acquaintances in Cambridge, Massachusetts, watching on screen the blatant leap of flames around the pyre, the muddy river and its filthy excremental banks, the extravagant wailing of the family—all confirming their image of India as a romantically primitive place. It was so unfair. He knew John would not bother to photograph the Sree Kanth, Trivandrum's modern two-storey air-conditioned cinema which not only showed nightly films in Malayalam, Hindi, and Tamil, but also ran an American movie once a month.

Krishnankutty was, in fact, planning to take his new wife to see the famous James Bond in *Live and Let Die*. He would undertake to open her eyes to the modern world. All these thoughts had been running through his head until the moment she had raised her face to him. He had then experienced a sort of vision in triplicate—the faces of Saraswathi, the recent corpse, and John's mother, all ringed with flowers, hastily intermingling like a multiple-exposure colour slide. It had then come to him that his mission was to establish in Trivandrum an electric crematorium. It was the answer to his newly graduated, newly returned zeal to do something for his country. Not only was it the ideal way to utilise his qualifications, but it would also contribute substantially to the modernisation of the city and would incidentally bring him fame and fortune.

John, when confided in a few days later, was appalled by the plan. He did not have the restless problem-solving mind of an engineer.

"It's practically obscene, Krish", he objected, still full of the beauty of the oneness of all things.

The two friends had met not in university classes, but in the rambling old frame house where they both rented one-bedroom apartments. Since Krishnankutty could not cook, John frequently shared his vegetarian and macrobiotic cuisine. John's family had so much money that it was only natural he should turn from things material to things spiritual. He had been delighted to come to India for his friend's wedding. He decided to stay on. He felt geographically closer to enlightenment, sensed a speeding-up in his search for truth. A crematorium among the coconut groves, it seemed to him, would interfere with the search.

"It's a dreadful idea, Krish", he repeated.

"What is it that you are meaning?" asked Krishnankutty, wounded. "You are taking photographs of the lighting of the pyre at the river bank. The water is smelling very bad, and the bank much filth, isn't it? Yes, yes. Are these rites being suitable for modern educated peoples?"

"Your rites are elemental and beautiful, Krish. One's ashes mingle with the ash and mud of life itself, down there. It is so much purer than the commercial racket of the death industry back home. It would be criminal to change it."

Krishnankutty thought sourly: Those who have already seen their parents croak in style (he was proud of his grasp of American idiom), with the dignity of wall-to-wall carpeting and unseen flame, can afford to be romantic about squalor and the acrid smell of burning flesh.

KRISHNANKUTTY wasted no time. Achuthan Nair, a cousin on his mother's side, was a city councillor. Krishnankutty invited his relative to dinner and revealed to him the splendours of his proposal. He volunteered to draw up designs, in collaboration with an architect, and to submit them to the Corporation of Trivandrum if Achuthan Nair could win that body's support and funding of the scheme.

Achuthan Nair's speech to the Corporation

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was considered notable, particularly in retrospect. It began with a quotation from Hamlet, which was most impressive. *Alas! poor Yorick*, said Achuthan Nair, inviting the councillors to gaze on the imaginary skull in his hand. How was this sort of noble sentiment possible, he demanded, without lasting mementos of the dead? And even though one's father would return in another form, did not one cherish the life of one's father as one had known it? Would not a small urn of ashes and a plaque bearing the father's name be something of beauty and dignity to be cherished by the family?

There were uneasy tuggings at *dhotis* and stirrings of sandalled feet, and Divakaran Nambudiripad, an elderly and respected Brahmin, interjected angrily: "Contamination! All is contamination!" The old man rose to his feet. What could be compared, he demanded, with the beauty and dignity of standing on land's end at Cape Comorin where Gandhiji's ashes had been scattered to the elements? What sentiment could the trivial West offer to compare with the religious grandeur of that stormy point where three seas met and where one could be reabsorbed into the universe?

But there were others who were more progressively minded, and they wanted Achuthan Nair to continue. He appealed to Kerala's reputation of enlightened advancement; he alluded to the reformist legacy of His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore; he pointed out that Gandhiji himself had studied in the West and had not been afraid to learn from it; he quoted, with a beautiful cadence, from Keats on the brevity of life, and ended in a crescendo of Milton.

His audience was swept before him. The motion was passed, the money allotted, and a contractor designated. There was a general feeling of well-being, broken only by the muttering of Divakaran Nambudiripad who warned darkly of the *Kali Yuga*, that Last Age of decline and dissolution.

TWO WEEKS LATER, when Achuthan Nair died suddenly of a heart attack, Divakaran Nambudiripad felt vindicated and the rest of the Corporation somewhat shaken. But the contractor had been hired and work on the project was already under way. Krishnankutty himself appeared before a special session of the Corporation and spoke with fervour of the rightness, the modernity, and the necessity of the enterprise. With a majority of the city councillors still behind him, he daily supervised the construction site and each nightfall distributed the day's wages to the Harijan labourers.

He invited John to film the work in progress. Not very enthusiastic, John brought his movie camera but was then delighted by the photographic possibilities. He was surprised to see as many women as men engaged in the heavy work. He watched breathless, running his film, as four men struggled to lift a great piece of rock for the foundations. Painfully they raised it, and then placed it carefully on the head of a squatting woman, very young and beautiful, with only a small coil of braided coconut leaf on her glossy hair to support the rock. When it was properly balanced, the four men let go and the girl very slowly rose to full height and walked across to the foundation, where she again stooped so that several men could lift it and place it in position on the wet mortar. This operation was repeated many times and the wall inched its way upward.

"Incredible!" said John. "Beautiful! Tragic!"

"Tragic!" Krishnankutty was startled.

"Such fragile bodies for such brutal work!"

Krishnankutty watched the labourers with surprised interest. Now that he thought about it, it was unusual. He had never seen women on construction sites in America. 'Our poor people are very strong", he said proudly. "They are having simple and happy lives."

John was both disturbed and uplifted by the incident. He retreated into contemplation. Suffering in India, he felt, had a sort of ineffable beauty about it, framed as it was by lush rice paddies and coconut groves and the smell of incense and jasmine garlands in the marketplace. He took to sitting by the temple baths each day, talking to the old men who sat on the stone steps in the sun. It was a source of grief to him that Kerala (unlike other Indian states) did not permit non-Hindus to enter the temples. Each day he meditated in view of the busily carved *gopuram* of Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple, longing to stand in the presence of Lord Vishnu. He saw less and less of Krishnankutty, found a guru who would

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help him read the *Vedas*, searched as far afield as Tiruvannamalai before he found an ashram that would initiate Westerners as Hindus, after which he decided to set out on foot to Cape Comorin as a pilgrim.

IN THE THIRD MONTH of Krishnankutty's project, when the exterior walls had risen impressively from the foundations, the building contractor was seriously injured in a fall from the scaffolding which had been improperly roped together. His back was broken, he lived on for three days of agony, and died murmuring that perhaps Lord Vishnu was offended by the crematorium.

The corporation was in an uproar. Even Krishnankutty was shaken, yet so certain was he that his inspiration, coming as it had in the high nuptial moment, had been an auspicious one, that he could not easily abandon his dream. He consulted an astrologer, and when that man gave him an unfavourable reading he consulted another one. The second prediction was genial, and armed with this reassurance he again went before the councillors. The task was long and difficult, but he eventually regained the backing of a bare majority.

However it proved to be impossible to hire a contractor anywhere in the district of Trivandrum. Word had even spread as far north as Quilon, but finally a man from Cochin, who had heard nothing of the matter, agreed to supervise the construction if his accommodation were provided in Trivandrum. Of course he learned the story within days of his arrival, and when word came from Cochin the following week that an aged uncle had died, the man hastily resigned and left the city as quickly as possible.

The more difficult the scheme became, the more determined Krishnankutty grew to see it through to a triumphant conclusion. He spared himself a pointless visit to the nervous elders of the Corporation, but with a single-minded zeal he advertised for a contractor from the adjacent state of Tamil Nadu, hired a man and brought him to Trivandrum at his own expense, gathered a completely different set of Harijan labourers, and saw to it that the contractor ate and slept as a guest at his own house, so that he would have little opportunity to talk to local people. And so the work was finished.

Krishnankutty went to the printer's and ordered fifty neatly-scripted white invitation cards. They said: You are invited to the inauguration of the new electric crematorium of Trivandrum. Conceived and designed by V. Krishnankutty, M.Eng. (Massachusetts Institute of Technology). He set the date a week in advance to give himself time to find a corpse. He mailed the cards to the councillors of the Corporation of Trivandrum, to representatives of *The Indian Express* and *The Hindu* as well as of the Malayalam newspapers, and to various local dignitaries.

There was some fluster about obtaining a corpse, since recently bereaved families seemed quite unprogressively horrified at the idea. Luckily Saraswathi remembered an old beggar woman who for months had been coming to their door for a daily handful of rice, for weeks had been coughing and spitting blood, and for days had not been seen. Servants were dispatched to make inquiries and they found—alas—the beggar woman's body in a derelict hut. Since there seemed to be no kin to claim her, it was logical that she should have the honour of the first technologically advanced send-off in Trivandrum.

At the appointed hour, Krishnankutty and the beggar woman awaited their guests. Only one person arrived, the reporter from the *Indian Express*. Krishnankutty was incensed, and postponed the ceremonial pushing of the button for a day. He spent the afternoon contacting and visiting as many city councillors as he could. There were many reasons of great import and unavoidable crisis to account for the absences, and of course, they all assured him, they would be present on the morrow. But the next day it was the same, and although it pained Krishnankutty deeply, imperatives of climate and hygiene dictated no further hesitation. History was made before the irreverent eyes of the lone reporter.

UNDAUNTED, Krishnankutty planned a "reinauguration", more public and inspiring. It was, however, difficult to obtain another corpse. Since only the Muslims and Christians buried their dead, one third of the city's population had to be discounted as

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potential clientele, and even the more progressive Hindu families were wary because of the history of the institution. It then occurred to Krishnankutty that his friend John was Christian, yet John's mother had been cremated. Why was this? Why did Christians in Kerala bury their dead, while for Christians in America the manner of disposal was apparently optional? Perhaps the answer to this problem lay in a re-education of the Christian community in Trivandrum. Once the public became used to the idea of the crematorium, once there had been a significant number of uneventful funerals, Krishnankutty was convinced that his difficulties would be over.

HE WENT to visit the heads of the three leading churches of the Christian community of Trivandrum—the Syrian Orthodox, the Roman Catholic, and the Church of South India. The Syrian priest, who did not of course believe in the caste system but nevertheless considered the Syrian Christians to be superior to the Nair caste (of which Krishnankutty was a member), received him frostily. Since it was well known to the Nairs that in Kerala their caste was of a greater and nobler antiquity than even that of the Brahmin immigrants from the Aryan north, Krishnankutty was not impressed. The priest explained matters to him as to a child. American Christians, he said, were living in a state of serious theological error. The Syrians, a people of great antiquity and nobility—he stressed this meaningfully—were the preservers of original historical truth, and would never deviate from ancient custom. Since the time of their founder St Thomas the Apostle, whose hallowed bones rested in Madras, they had buried their dead.

Samuel Varghese, the Roman Catholic priest, was a man of Indo-Portuguese descent from Goa. He was more courteous, deferring politely to Krishnankutty. He explained that since Our Lord himself had been buried, and since Christians awaited the final resurrection of the body, Catholic Christians all over the world, including America, considered burial the only acceptable final rite in the sight of God.

There were two equally important congregations of the Church of South India in Trivandrum. Theoretically they had merged thirty years previously in the union of all Protestant denominations, but in practice they had little to do with each other. The English-speaking high-born congregation was the legacy of the Anglican missionaries of the British Raj, and still used the Episcopalian liturgy. The bishop told Krishnankutty that cremation could never be contemplated because there was no provision for it in the Book of Common Prayer.

The pastor of the poorer Malayalam-speaking congregation, the Reverend Jesudas, had been trained by the evangelical Congregationalists of the London Missionary Society. He conceded that while there was no express theological injunction against cremation, within India it did of course have the connotation of a Hindu ritual. And Christians, he said, were a people called to be different, to bear witness to the gospel of Christ. He quoted from the King James version of the Bible. "Come ye out from among them, saith the Lord, and be ye separate and touch not the unclean thing." For Christians, he said as gently as possible, Hindu rituals were—metaphorically speaking, of course—unclean.

ALL THIS WAS VERY CONFUSING, and not very promising, for Krishnankutty. But he felt that hope was not completely excluded with respect to the former London Missionary Society people. Perhaps if John, who was of that same Protestant tradition, were to talk with the pastor, something might be achieved. So he went to find his friend John, whom he had not seen during the many months of his construction project. But John, it seemed, had bent as new rice before the monsoon of enlightenment, and it was several days before he was found in a small and wretched hut alongside the temple. He was barely recognisable.

"Are you ill?" Krishnankutty asked in alarm.

"I am part of the cosmos", answered John. "I am not my body, which does not concern me."

There was an unwholesome yellowish tinge to John's skin and a sharp dreadful odour about his body. Krishnankutty became aware of a puddle of bloodied excrement trickling from the straw mat on which John sat. Hepati-

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tis, he thought with alarm.

"John, my dear friend, you are very ill. I am calling a taxi and taking you immediately to the Medical College Hospital."

John gazed from his doorway, across the expanse of sacred water, to the towering *gopuram* of the temple.

"In the presence of Lord Vishnu, I am safe", he replied. "I do not wish to go to a hospital."

"This is being very foolish, John. Perhaps you are not trusting our hospitals? I assure you that Medical College Hospital is not inferior to excellent hospitals in America. We are going now, isn't it?"

"No! I will remain in the presence of the Lord."

"John, John! I am a Vishnavite. Each day I make *puja* to Lord Vishnu. Yet I would not do this! No modern and educated Vishnavite would do this. You cannot do this. You are coming with me."

"I have taken a vow to meditate on this shrine of Lord Vishnu for thirty days. I cannot leave. Would you have me break a vow?"

Nothing could be done about a vow. Krishnankutty went home in considerable consternation. Each day he visited his friend, bringing rice and fruit which John was unable to swallow. He then brought bowls of *payasam*, a thin sweet gruel, but still John vomited as soon as he had eaten. He was now feverish and often unconscious, but adamantly rejected all pressure to enter a hospital. Who can release himself from a solemn vow made to the Lord of the Universe?

He is dying, thought Krishnankutty. He is *dying*!

At first unbidden and pushed aside with shame, the thought came to him that John would be his next corpse. But after all, why not? Certainly he knew that John had no objections to cremation. He did not of course want his friend to die, but if fate decreed. . . .

"I HAVE A LAST request, Krish", said John weakly from his straw mat. Krishnankutty bent solicitously over his friend.

"You are not to contact my relatives or send my body back to America. Mankind is my family, the universe is my home. My ashes must mingle with Truth, here in India."

"Yes, yes. I promise", said Krishnankutty sadly. He could see the invitation cards, discreetly edged in black.

"I want to be carried from the temple to the river bank, and it is my wish that you, my dear friend, you alone, should light my funeral pyre."

"Ahh, John, John! I beg you, do not ask this of me. Consider the cause of progress. . . ."

"It is my final wish that you scatter my ashes at Cape Comorin and let the three oceans carry them to the ends of the earth."

Sadly Krishnankutty kept vigil while the universe, by subtle rearrangement, absorbed John. Then he crossed the street to the temple flower-sellers.

It is my *karma*, he sighed.

He placed a garland on the corpse.

The Itch

He hates the Poles, but more
he hates the Hungarians;—lately
he hates the Blacks, they give him an itch.
No rash on his stomach but
an unbearable itch which he scratches.
His wife,
watching, suspects it's herself. *And am I,*
she asks, *his black Hungarian*
of Polish origin then?—Shit, rubbish, he hisses
pettishly, tetchily, waspishly, pouring
camomile lotion, cold creams, cold
water over and over his wretched, badgering skin.

Gerda Mayer

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Quest for an Assassin

Mehmet Ali Agca

Report from Malatya—By PAUL HENZE

I'VE BEEN TRAVELLING in Turkey for almost 30 years, have visited some 50 of the country's 67 provinces, but I had never gone to Malatya. I am not aware of any special reason for avoiding it; but, after all, it has no important historical attractions or cultural monuments, and it had never been on any route I had taken.

In modern Turkey Malatya has two claims to fame: as the centre of the country's dried apricot industry and as the home town of the Turkish Republic's second revolutionary hero and closest associate of Kemal Atatürk, Ismet Inönü. Though born in Izmir in 1884, Ismet Pasha descended from an old Malatya-based Turkish clan (the Kürümoğullar). All his family ties were there and he returned frequently during his long years of service as President and Prime Minister. He died in his 90th year; and, as I found, he is still remembered warmly in his home town. It is perhaps the only place in Turkey where monuments to Atatürk take second place. An enormous statue of Inönü dominates the city's central square.

Malatya was a surprise for me. From reading the international press on Mehmet Ali Agca, the would-be assassin of the Pope in St Peter's Square, Rome, I had the vague impression that it would be a dismal place. Many of the foreign journalists who had rushed there after Agca took his shots at Pope John Paul II had never seen a Turkish provincial town before, and they were predisposed to find misery and squalor. After all, shouldn't a Papal assassin come from a depressing place, festering with poverty and hopelessness? But Nagel's *Encyclopaedic Guide to Turkey* turned out to be right:

> "Past Marash . . . the road enters a mountainous region and after a picturesque stretch of country that becomes increasingly barren leads to the basin of Malatya. It is difficult at first to distinguish the verdure of Malatya at the bottom of the . . . basin that stretches as far as the Euphrates, on the southern slopes of the plain. It is a pleasant, spacious town, with wide boulevards running between houses set amidst gardens and orchards. This is very different from the usual squat towns of the Anatolian plateau. . . ."

I arrived early in the evening, found a comfortable room at the Hotel Sinan, and was served a good dinner with wine by friendly waiters at the huge Emniyet Lokantasi a short distance from the main square. The restaurant was crowded with local businessmen and families eating out. My first impressions of the city quite fitted the Nagel description: spaciousness and activity, streets filled with people, still buying at countless well-stocked shops in the early evening. Fruit and vegetable stands were piled high with splendid melons, grapes, figs, aubergines, squash, salad greens. Bookstores—there must have been a score of them in the streets around the main square—were filled with casual browsers and customers buying newspapers and magazines. The smell of roasting corn and chestnuts rose from the grills of street vendors. The call to prayer echoed from a large mosque. I walked down the side streets, a mixture of solid traditional two-storey houses and multi-storey apartment buildings, with the odour of wood smoke lacing the cool evening air. Most people in Malatya heat with firewood.

EARLY NEXT MORNING I called on the *vali* (governor), Aydin Özakin, at his office in the spacious provincial government headquarters that occupy the north side of Inönü Square. Even at 8:30 in the morning his anteroom was crowded with men and women with papers to sign or petitions to present. The *vali* had been advised of my coming by the Foreign Ministry in Ankara. An obliging aide took my name and rushed to tell him I had arrived. I was shown in ahead of everyone else, and we talked together over tea and dried apricots stuffed with almonds.

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I explained what I hoped to do, and the governor proceeded to put in a series of telephone calls to alert other officials of my coming. We talked of his work in Malatya, to which he had only recently been appointed (having been *vali* in Muş, farther east, though he was actually a native of Izmir and had been educated in Istanbul). He had quickly become an enthusiast for his new province—Malatya was an exciting place, "the best city in the East".... Evidently it had enormous potential and no hopeless problems. With over 250,000 people it was growing at the rate of only about 3% a year. People were not coming in from the countryside in overwhelming numbers, and government policy was to keep them in the villages by improving facilities and schools, and helping them increase agricultural production. He echoed what one hears so frequently in Istanbul and Ankara these days: "the best way for Turkey to develop rapidly" is to expand food production and processing for export.[1]

I left the governor's office in a new blue jeep and was driven to provincial security headquarters on the edge of the city. The security director, a husky, blue-eyed man in his late 30s, was a native of Düzce, not far from the Black Sea in Bolu Province. He had a brief on the Agca family ready for me.

IN 1979 THEY HAD traced the family back to the great-grandfather. They had always been simple people, Turks not Kurds, of no particular distinction. They had lived in the Kayseri area, worked as herders and occasionally as labourers. The father's father had emigrated eastward to Hekimhan, a country town north of Malatya. Mehmet Ali's father, Ahmet, had been his only son and there were no other close relatives on the father's side. The security people had apparently picked up gossip that the mother had been a "bad woman"—i.e. sexually loose; also allegations that her family had originally been *çingene*—gypsy, nomadic. But they were all second-hand, hearsay.

Her family, too, had been obscure and consisted of marginal agriculturalists and labourers. She had several brothers and sisters. She had married late for a Turkish country girl (well into her 20s), and the story was told that her husband, who was said by this time to have had a reputation for rough living, drinking and difficult behaviour, had been persuaded to take her because she had a doubtful reputation. While Ahmet Agca and his wife lived in Hekimhan, however, they seem to have been very ordinary, law-abiding citizens. They moved to Malatya so that the father could improve his opportunities for work and give the children "a better life." The mother still had relatives in and around Hekimhan. She was reported to have a sister living in Charleroi in Belgium, married to a Turkish worker there, who sent her occasional money. There were vague reports, apparently never confirmed, of a brother working in Switzerland. In the dossier I was given, the security brief concluded with the dry, tense observation:

> "There is no evidence of religious sectarianism in the family. There was no evidence found of links with Alevi (Shiite) activity or with Armenian interests."

Malatya once had a substantial Armenian population. Only 30–50 Armenian families, I was told, now remain, mostly assimilated. In some of them only the older generation remains—the children having gone off to Istanbul or emigrated abroad. There are several active Armenian merchants, and a substantial office building near the main square belongs to a local Armenian businessman. There was no reflection of foreign Armenian agitational activity in Malatya. Mehmet Ali Agca, growing up there, was unlikely to have had any significant Armenian contacts or boyish cause for early prejudice.

It was strange that he had been rumoured to be "an Armenian" when he was caught in Rome. He was reported to have written a poem against Armenians when he was a schoolboy, and had been the subject of a brief police investigation at the time. But I found nothing in Malatya security records about this. He had no reputation as any kind of troublemaker or indeed as a leader of student agitation during the clashes of a few years ago. The Security Headquarters had no evidence of his association with extremists of any kind, religious or secular.

[1] Agribusiness is the most promising way to create new jobs and new income in Malatya, he stressed:

> "Population growth is slowing here, but we will still be having enormous numbers of young people entering the workforce in the years ahead. We export labour now at a higher rate than most Turkish provinces—we have 15,000 workers in Germany. There is a great demand for new workers in Saudi Arabia, Libya and other Arab countries, and they are recruiting here now for them. But our people don't like to go there—they do not like the climate, and social conditions are too backward. We have to create new jobs here. If we are not successful, in five or ten years we will have a repetition of what we had before the 12th of September—Communists will pour money and arms in again and will stir up these people to destroy our society and democratic system." ...

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I WENT ON to visit the Agcas, accompanied by three young men who knew the way and were well known to the family. Their manner was easy-going, and they seem to have developed considerable rapport with the mother, sister, and brother. I had a strange almost surrealistic feeling as I came face to face with the family of the man who had attempted to take the life of the Pope. A fortnight before I had been in Rome, walking through the streets near the Vatican where he had made his final plans and plotted his escape, retracing his movements in St Peter's Square and wondering what had gone through the mind of this young Turk who had thrust himself into history so notoriously. . . . Now suddenly I was in a modest area of small mud-brick and stone houses on the outskirts of Malatya—a settlement area like those on the edges of all Turkish cities, perhaps not as extensive or lively as some, but not as downtrodden as many.

I had visited areas like this many times before in all parts of Turkey, and spent time talking to people who live in them. They didn't give me the impression of being depressed or "alienated" people. Usually less than a generation from the countryside, they appeared to be busy improving their lives. Several members of a family usually work; everyone of school age goes to school; they seek out all the opportunities a city can offer. However meagre their circumstances may seem to the outsider (who probably can't help judging them from the vantage point of his own affluence), the great majority of the people who live in Turkish *gecekondular*, or dwelling areas "put up overnight", see themselves as on the way to improving their chances in life.[2]

Arriving at the simple whitewashed house, I walked from the muddy street through a gate and along a short path to the main entrance. I was greeted by the mother, Müzeyyen Agca, with shrieks of protest.

"Another journalist! I have seen enough of journalists! They are all the same. They ask me the same things over and over. They have no understanding for my pain and the misery I have had to endure because of this son whom I want to forget. Why should I repeat what I have already said dozens of times? What good does it do anyone? I have nothing to say! . . ."

She stood at her door, motionless, looking at the ground. She kept her white scarf pulled across her nose and mouth, showing only her pale, lined forehead and acutely-crossed brown eyes. Wisps of graying brownish hair were visible at the edge of her scarf. She was dressed in the long skirt and sweater of a peasant woman and looked thin, strained, fragile. She was about as far from living up to the promise of her name—Müzeyyen, an uncommon, old-fashioned Arabic name meaning "decorated" or "embellished"—as could be imagined.

Her shouting at me, of course, violated all the tenets of traditional Turkish hospitality, but I couldn't help feeling deeply moved by the sight of this tragic woman. What a nightmare she had been living in for nearly three years! A good son who had once been the best proof that she had overcome the vicissitudes of a raw life had gained fame as one of the most spectacular villains of the era. Investigators and journalists, TV cameramen, the idly curious had come to keep her wounds open. Would they never heal? If she had indeed been a "bad woman" in her youth, was she now suffering retribution for her sins? . . .[3]

MÜZEYYEN AGCA made a motion as if to walk back into her house, then she hesitated, and motioned to us to sit down on benches under a vine which shaded a small porch but now, with yellowing leaves, let the autumn sunlight through. She had not expected me to know Turkish—apparently no other foreign journalists who had come to talk to her had done so. The young men with me had the antiphonal habit of repeating everything I said, as if they were interpreting (which they were not). As she realised I was speaking her own language, her curiosity was aroused. I explained I was an *araştirmaci* (researcher), not really a *gazeteci*

[2] *The Gecekondu* (Cambridge University Press, 1976), by Kemal Karpat, a Turkish-American historian who teaches at the University of Wisconsin, is the definitive work on the psychology of the inhabitants of what are often incorrectly termed "slums."

Karpat refutes almost all the facile generalisations about such areas—as sloughs of despond and despair, and breeding-grounds of political irrationalism—that were repeated by so many of the commentators who reported on Agca's background in the wake of his attack on the Pope.

Gecekondu dwellers, as Karpat's surveys demonstrate, tend to be harder-working and more confident of their capacity to improve their lot through their own efforts than the average of the population as a whole. They have a higher rate of participation in the political process than the national average, and they tend to vote most frequently for middle-of-the-road, moderate politicians.

[3] By old-fashioned Turkish village standards, "*kötü kadin*" can be applied to a woman who has done nothing more than surrender her virginity before marriage. Cross-eyed and with rather sharp features, Müzeyyen Agca can hardly have been a beauty in her youth. Not being attractive, or sought after for marriage, she might well (as I rather suspect) have been accused of immorality simply because she had passed the usual age for marrying before finding a husband.

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(journalist). I was not looking for news stories. I was trying to find out "basic things" about her son, and indeed was studying the whole problem of terrorism in Turkey. I assured her I did not want to embarrass or injure the family by anything I wrote. I told her I had recently been in Italy and had visited the Vatican. . . .

That triggered a quick turn in the conversation.

"You have been in Italy? What have you heard of my son? Why aren't the Italians allowing him to send the letters he is writing? I want to know how he is, what he is thinking. Why do they deny me this small consolation? Why don't they send his letters? What harm can that do to anyone? Can't you tell the Italians to let his letters go?"

I agreed it made no sense—and confirmed to her that in Italy I had been told that his letters were being held back. I had urged that they be sent, if only because they might provide useful information which would help us all (and not merely the police) understand why he had attacked the Pope and who had put him up to doing it.

"How is the Pope?" she asked, with a sense of deep concern. "I admire him greatly and I have prayed for him. How many days did he spend in hospital? How serious were his wounds? I hope he has made a complete recovery. It was a terrible thing my son did to this man. I cannot understand it." I told her that everything I had heard in Italy indicated that the Pope had made a good recovery. "I hope he has a long life", she added. "He is a good man." The scarf had come off her face, revealing her drawn features, sunken cheeks, tense mouth. Now 50, she looked as if she ate little, lived in a state of perpetual strain. It could be that only because of her tough, peasant inheritance had she retained her health and sanity at all.

The daughter, Fatma, emerged from the house and stood beside her mother. Nearer 30 than 20, she looked weary and a bit frightened, but it was also apparent that she was basically an attractive girl: taller than her mother, with dark brown hair and fine features, blue-green eyes, a good feminine voice. She spoke cultivated, carefully-enunciated Turkish without a trace of the peasant harshness of the mother's. She had finished high school last year. She had liked studying. Her favourite subjects were history and literature. What was she doing now? "Living at home, keeping house", she replied with an air of resignation.

Educated girls in provincial towns do not have an easy time finding employment. The secretaries and administrative assistants, the clerks in stores, the waiters in restaurants and service personnel in hotels are all men; banks and modern business firms employ women. Mostly they go to work in government offices or as teachers. But who in Malatya would want to hire Fatma Agca, "the sister of a killer"? I did not press the question of work. She would have no alternative but to remain at home and pass the days with her tense, sad mother. Nor would she be regarded as very marriageable. Only a man who could not find a wife easily would marry "the sister." Mehmet Ali had put his family under a crushing burden, and this is what was so obviously depressing about the Agca household, not "the conditions" in which Mehmet Ali had grown up, for then there were hopes of a happier future. . . .

THE MOTHER, now relatively relaxed, was willing to talk about her son, rather eager in fact. It was clear that much of her thought still revolved around Mehmet Ali, in spite of her protestations that she wished to "forget him." She was contradictory, of course, and at times more than a shade irrational. Tension, frustration and despair welled up over and over again, in great outbursts of shouting and wailing, when I put questions she found awkward.

About her eldest son's infancy and childhood, she confirmed what had already been published in the Turkish press: he had suffered from a mild form of epilepsy (a condition termed *sara* in rural Turkey, and as common as in any other society), with spells of fainting and rigid unconsciousness. After about the age of ten, Mehmet Ali seems to have outgrown these. He had had no medical treatment. His mother attributed the nervousness, short temper, and impatience which he often displayed as a teenager to the effects of this condition. But then, I tried to assure her, what teenager does not display nervousness, short temper, impatience?

Her husband seems to have been a man greatly affected by stress, alternating between brooding moods and outbursts of energy, excitement, anger; he had turned to drink, which undermined his health. She did not really want to talk about him. Her life with him probably included only brief periods of tranquillity. She spoke feelingly of the problems she faced when he died in Zonguldak, a coal-and-steel centre on the Black Sea, nearly a thousand kilometres away. She recounted with sadness and pride how she had kept the family together after she lost her husband and raised three young children, aged between three and eight, on a mea-

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gre pension,[4] with help from relatives and neighbours, and from Mehmet Ali after he was old enough to work.

"He was a good son", she recalled with a surge of pride. "He helped us whenever he could. He never wasted money. As soon as he was able to earn, he went to work, selling water in the railroad station, helping out on construction sites, carrying sand, earning money for his clothes and buying things he needed for school and books. . . ."

Her mother whispered to Fatma, who went out through the gate and returned a few minutes later with a small package. Inside the house, I noted that it had both refrigerator and TV—not exceptional among Turkish *gecekondu* families these days—(though the question crossed my mind whether these had been bought with some of the money Mehmet Ali had put in his mother's bank account before he murdered Abdi Ipekçi; [5] it seemed too cruel to ask). There were sounds in the kitchen, and soon Fatma emerged with a tray of cups of steaming, fragrant Turkish coffee. Had the ice been broken? The rituals of traditional hospitality were now being observed. . . .

"Did Mehmet Ali like school?" I asked. "From the beginning it was his life. He was always studious, serious. He read everything that came into his hands. . . ." What were his favourite subjects? "History and literature. He liked reading Turkish history and historical novels. He wrote poetry from the time he was ten or eleven. He even wrote a novel when he was thirteen", his mother volunteered. A novel? What was it about? "I am not sure, it was something historical." Is it still around? "I burned it—I burned all of his papers when the Abdi Ipekçi business developed—I didn't want anything in the house to remind me of a son who had disgraced it. I wanted to forget that he had lived here."

"Do you still have any of the books he read?" I asked, perhaps a bit too eagerly, for what might he have read that could have given him some of the ideas that led him into terrorism? "I burned them too", she insisted.

I asked Fatma whether she remembered any titles.

"I was younger and wasn't interested in books then, but I know later he kept reading history and economics."

The mother became impatient and began shouting: "What does it matter what he read? The effect of it is all lost now. He didn't learn what he should have from it. He fell into the hands of an organisation and disgraced us all." The poor woman began wailing and moaning. She was visibly embarrassing Fatma, who had been ready to discuss her brother with greater openness.

I CHANGED THE SUBJECT, asking Fatma: "Who were Mehmet Ali's friends?"

"He didn't have any close friends. There are none around now. When he was in high school, his closest friends were all teachers. They gave him things to read and he spent a lot of time with them." I asked Fatma if she could remember any of their names. She could not. "I was a girl and I wasn't interested in the things he was interested in."

Having taken hold of herself again, the mother added: "Mehmet Ali did not waste his time in idleness. He was not interested in sports or girls and did not wander around the streets just to pass the time. He worked whenever he could. He was a very good boy. First he was going to be a teacher, but later he wanted to get a higher education. He loved me and the whole family very much and always showed me great respect. He would not push me aside. 'I will never be able to forget what you have gone without, what you have done for my sake', he would say. When he went to the university in Ankara, he came home for the summers and went to work as soon as he could find a job. . . ."

So far as I knew, here was a new fact. Mehmet Ali had spent two years at the University of Ankara before transferring to Istanbul. Practically all the accounts of his life had somehow missed this. He had taken university entrance examinations in his last high-school year (1975–76) and had done well. He qualified for the History and Geography Faculty of the University of Ankara, which he entered in the fall of 1976.[6]

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[4] Equivalent at that time to something less than $100 (£40) per month.

[5] Editor of the liberal Istanbul daily, *Milliyet*, and one of the most widely respected public figures in Turkey at the time.

[6] It was during his final year in the teacher-training high school in Malatya that he told his brother Adnan, "I won't be a teacher for TL 10,000 a month [then equivalent to about $250]. I will find a way to earn a lot more money in this system."

In 1976 Turkey had more than 300,000 students at universities and other higher institutes. In nation-wide competitive examinations each year, approximately one out of seven students succeeds; but many do not get high enough scores to choose the university and faculty they wish. While one in four candidates in Istanbul succeeds in passing these examinations, in the provinces (especially in the East) only one in fifteen or twenty passes.

Mehmet Ali Agca was among the top students in Malatya. His ambition drove him to take the examination again two years later (a common practice among Turkish university students) and to succeed in qualifying for his first choice: economics at the University of Istanbul.

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The fact that Mehmet Ali spent two years at the University of Ankara in the hectic years 1976–78, when political agitation was intensifying steadily, could be of prime significance. In Ankara he could have come into contact with recruiters representing every extremist faction, both of the Right and the Left. He would conceivably have been accessible to Soviet and East European intelligence operatives working out of their over-staffed embassies, information centres, and trade missions in the capital. From Ankara he could have been sent for training in a PLO camp.

I TRIED TO learn something from his mother and sister about his travels during this period. They knew that in summer he came home from Ankara; they claimed to know nothing else. Turkish security officials are suspicious that Agca may have gone to Lebanon as early as the summer of 1977, but they had no proof. He would have gone under an alias. He might have gone during the autumn or winter of either year he was in Ankara. Discipline at the University was lax: students came and went as they pleased; classes were often suspended for long periods because of turbulence and clashes.

Increasing numbers of Turks were being trained in PLO camps in the late 1970s. Julian Manyon's Italian sources [7] maintain that Agca described "Palestinian training", and the story matches other descriptions of using false identities (students and teachers), of lessons in weaponry and tactics, and in forging documents. Agca is supposed to have met Teslim Töre, head of the Marxist Turkish People's Liberation Army, in Lebanon. (Töre is said to have come originally from Malatya.) Agca, having crossed into Syria at Kilis, took a taxi to Damascus and from there was taken to a camp 20 kilometres from Beirut. We know he admitted during the first phase of his interrogation in Rome that he was acting on behalf of George Habbash (he withdrew the claim after the Reverend Hilarion Capucci called a press conference to deny any Palestinian connection with the would-be Papal assassin). If his mother and sister had any light to shed on this mysterious part of his life—which was obviously less and less related to theirs after he left Malatya for Ankara—they could not be persuaded to reveal it.

I TALKED TO Müzeyyen Agca about her son's religious orientation. "He was not religious", she replied without a moment's hesitation. "He had no interest in religion and went to the mosque only a few times on [religious] holidays." We talked about what he had planned to do with his life. They did not seem to know. Did he ever show an interest in getting into politics? They were emphatic that he had not even had strong opinions about political parties—a rather exceptional attitude for a young Turk of the mid-1970s, when every aspect of life took on political colouration (I well recall from my own travels and conversations during that period that most high-school and university students felt compelled to profess party preferences, even if they were very shallowly based).

Suddenly the mother interjected the comment, "You know, my son did not kill Abdi Ipekçi."

"How do you know?" I asked.

"He told me. He told me when we visited him in prison—this was the last time I saw him—in the fall of 1979. We all went to Istanbul to see him—Fatma, Adnan and myself. He said to me, 'Mother, I did not kill Abdi Ipekçi. I was made the scapegoat for others who did it. They set me up for it.' " It was clear that Fatma was more doubtful, disinclined to share this illusion with her mother.[8]

"You believe your son?" I asked the mother again. "Yes, I believe him. . . ." Her voice trailed off. There was no point pressing her further.

"When", I asked, "did you last see him before his arrest?" "When he came home in February 1979. He stayed some time. It was between terms at the university in Istanbul. Then he went back to study." Fatma started to speak, then hesitated and fell silent.

"Did he come back to Malatya after he escaped from prison in November 1979?" They both insisted that he had not. There had been no letters from him, and no word passed through anyone else. Until he shot the Pope, they had no idea where he was.

"The organisation that he fell in with took pos-

[7] Julian Manyon is the producer of a Thames TV special programme, *TV Eye—A Plot to Kill the Pope*, first broadcast in the UK on 3 September 1981.

[8] Abdi Ipekçi was killed on 1 February 1979. Agca was not apprehended until 25 June 1979 in Istanbul, to which he had returned after visiting Malatya. It is still unclear whether Agca acted alone, had another accomplice in the shooting, or actually did not himself do the shooting at all but took the blame for it as part of a pre-arranged plan. During his trial in Turkey in the autumn of 1979, he withdrew his earlier confession and threatened to reveal the real killer. This threat has been interpreted as a signal to his sponsors to speed up plans for his rescue from prison. He escaped on 23 November 1979, without shedding further light on the killing of Abdi Ipekçi.

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session of him. They got him out of prison and prepared him to attack the Pope."

As a simple summary, this seemed to be as close to the truth as anyone had come. We chatted a little longer, and I asked about the second son. He would be home in the early afternoon. I thanked them for their time and their hospitality, and sincerely wished them well.

I WALKED BACK to the street feeling depressed and in a curious way profoundly angered by the tragedy which Mehmet Ali Agca's crimes—and the warped motives of the men who had inspired and trained and paid him to commit them—had brought upon this bedraggled, melancholy and agitated woman, old before her time. She had never seemed to have a chance of high hopes in life. Without education, marrying late and badly, she had had more than her share of pain and strain. But she had been blessed with three good-looking and intelligent children, and she worked hard to give them opportunities in life of which she and her husband could never have dreamed. The pace of economic and social development has obviously been so fast in this part of the world that the son of "marginal" parents, living in poverty, could take advantage of the opportunities a modern state creates to bring himself to the high levels of educational achievement.

Mehmet Ali Agca went awry, but there was nothing in his background or in the circumstances of his upbringing (so often mythologised by superficial sociologists and facile determinists) which made this inevitable. He was not victimised by religious fanaticism—there was none in his life. He did not suffer from minority status. Poverty and lowly origins did not deprive him of opportunity. He was gifted with a good intelligence and he used it to first-class effect, passing tough, competitive, national university entrance examinations twice, and being accepted at two of his country's best universities. Agca's misfortune was that in spite of his intelligence and drive, he somewhere along the way fell into the hands of people who exploited him for destructive purposes. Were there flaws in his character that made him susceptible to such exploitation? His ideological motivation seems weak. To a greater extent than most young Turks of his time, Agca seems to have avoided intense involvement in the Right-Left commotion that intensified steadily during his high-school and university years. In everything he has said about "student in-fighting" during his time, he has been consistent and vehement in disavowing playing a partisan role—on the surface at least. . . .

WE RAN INTO the younger son, Adnan, 18, early in the afternoon on his way home from school. Newspaper photographs of him after the attack in Rome had given the impression of a crude, unattractive young man. He had been described by Erhan Akyildiz, the *Milliyet* journalist (in his series of articles on Agca and his family background in May 1981), as having "a broad forehead, sunken cheeks, protruding cheekbones, continually open-mouthed. At first glance looking thirty, but only eighteen. . . ." But I found him a clean-shaven, neatly-combed, dark-haired young man wearing a well-pressed suit with a white shirt and tie.[9] He jumped into our jeep when we pulled up beside him. He was obviously familiar with the driver from the security headquarters who had been assigned to me and, after brief explanations of who I was and what I was doing, talked readily. He was articulate, quick, bright-eyed, not exactly "open-mouthed."

Did he enjoy school? Very much. His favourite subjects? History and English. What did he like least? Mathematics. Was he getting good grades? Yes, even in mathematics he was well above the pass mark. His best grades? In English and Literature, and he was working very hard: "I want to master the language and I am reading extra books on my own. . . ." He showed me a text he was carrying. What had he done during the summer? He had worked on a construction project and made enough money to buy his clothes for the year and the extra books with which to study on his own and prepare for the university entrance examinations. What did he want to do? Get a higher education—"I am not sure what I want to specialise in, but I am determined to go to the university so that I can help my family." He looked sufficiently like his older brother to be readily recognisable, but with less harshness and coldness about the eyes, and his life so far seemed to be almost a duplicate. Wouldn't Mehmet Ali Agca have responded in much the same way five years ago?

[9] Turkish high-school students in the provinces now pride themselves on neat dress and good grooming. In my recent travels in south-east Turkey I found they invariably wore suits and ties.

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It was time to talk of Mehmet Ali. Adnan repeated most of the things about his brother that had already been reported in the press. He did not resent retelling them, in a straightforward and matter-of-fact fashion. He recalled the name of the student dormitory where Mehmet Ali had stayed during his time in Ankara—Beşevler; but he did not know much about his brother's life there. There was too much difference in their ages. He had not gone to Ankara to visit him, but he had been in the capital on his own and was impressed with it. I asked him to give me his judgment—where had his brother gone wrong? What organisation had got hold of him? Whose interests did he think he was serving?

"I don't know", Adnan replied. "I can't understand my brother. What he did was stupid—and he was intelligent and should have known it. But I don't think much about that now. I am not going to let my brother spoil my life. I want to live my own life, and I am going to live it for the good of my family and my country. I am not going to let my life be darkened by the shadow of my brother."

WE HAD PULLED UP in front of the Agca house. His mother came out and stood at the jeep window as we continued the conversation—Adnan explaining the work he was doing on his own at home to prepare as thoroughly as possible for university entrance exams. He lamented the lack of opportunities to practise English. (I talked to him a bit in English, and he answered intelligently in carefully formed sentences with fair pronunciation.) His mother broke into the conversation, and he firmly but politely told her not to interrupt. Fatma appeared in the background. I asked Adnan to write down his address so that I could send him some books that might be helpful in his studies. He thanked me and shook hands before alighting. Saying a second goodbye to the tense old mother and to Fatma standing quietly on one side, I felt more hope for them. Could this second son perhaps compensate for the tragedy which the first had brought upon them? Like them, he must have endured a great deal during the past years, embarrassment with his schoolmates, shame in being identified as "a murderer's brother." He seems to have stood it well, even to have matured quickly as a result.

I WENT ON to visit the schools Mehmet Ali had attended. The Yeşiltepe Ortaokulu,[10] within easy walking distance from the Agca house, stands at the edge of the district, on one side of extensive fenced grounds. Built a decade-and-a-half ago to accommodate more students than it now has, it is still at the edge of the built-up area. Boztepe has been growing slowly, and the buildings now accommodate both junior and senior high schools. Population pressure has not been heavy and the school is not overburdened. Students, both boys and girls (the latter all in blue skirts and white blouses, with only their sweaters showing more colour and individuality), were playing volleyball in the playground.

The high school to which Mehmet Ali went is close to the centre of the city. A teacher-training high school then (with boarding students from smaller towns in the province), it has now become a vocational high school serving only the city, and has a totally different teaching staff. Sturdily constructed, on landscaped grounds with trees and flowerbeds, the school consisted of several buildings, including a large gym—unusual in Turkish high schools. Neatly-dressed students were walking, sitting, standing in groups around the grounds—well-behaved, as they all appear to be now since the takeover by the military. We found a man who was part of the service staff and had worked here for ten years—the only person left from the time when Mehmet Ali Agca was a student here. He had not known him, he said, for he had not been a student who attracted attention to himself or was prominent in student politics. Besides he had not been a boarder, like most of the students of that time, but a day student from the city, and so spent less time in the school. This man confirmed that the school, then known as the Mustafa Kemal Öğretmen Lisesi (teacher-training high school), had seen its share of student disorders a few years earlier. Some of the teachers had been "very radical" and were more involved in "agitation" than the students. The presence of large numbers of live-in students had encouraged "politicking and agitation." But he did not convey the impression that the situation here had been worse than in most other places in Turkey at the same time.

NEITHER DID the security people with whom I talked further about Agca, student strife, and terrorism.

Malatya had been far from the hardest hit of Turkish cities. It lies on the edge of regions heavily

[10] The official name of the Agcas' district is Yeşiltepe—Green Hill; it was nicknamed "Boztepe"—Gray Hill—when it was first established because it was treeless and barren. It is less so now, but there is less greenery than in many other parts of Malatya.

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populated by Kurds, but its population is primarily Turkish. I heard Kurdish spoken in the streets much less often than in the cities to the south-east. Malatya has both Sunnis and Alevis (Shiites), but the situation between them was never so heated as it became in Kahramanmaraş to the south-west and in some other eastern Turkish cities. I left Malatya reasonably sure that Agca had probably been honest in claiming that he had not been heavily engaged in Right-Left clashes or terrorism in Malatya. As he wrote in his confession, on 30 June 1979:

> "I always went around by myself. I went to the movies, to games, to the theatre, and occasionally to the opera. When there was time I went to libraries. In this way I took advantage of what was interesting in my surroundings. In spite of the fact that there were fights among Alevis and Sunnis in the district in which I lived in Malatya, I did not take sides and even though I was a Sunni, I had many Alevi friends. . . ."

Agca's accomplice Yavuz Çaylan, who drove the escape car in the Ipekçi murder, was a fellow native of Malatya, and gave a similar description of Malatya at the time of his own confession to the police: [11]

> "While I was at the Turan Emeksiz high school in Malatya, there were Rightist and Leftist groups. There was also the Alevi-Sunni question. From involvements in this question, Right-Left questions became apparent. I was a Sunni. Because Alevis were generally Leftists, the Sunnis Rightists, and because my friends were also Sunnis, I inclined to the view of the Right. In school these issues became hardened. . . ."

Other statements which Agca made to his interrogators in 1979 fortify the impression that he was "a loner" who held himself above the partisan rivalries around him:

> "In school one day for amusement I was reading the magazines *Girgir* and *Çarşaf*. A fellow took the magazines from my hand and tore them up, saying: 'Who brought this crap to school?' Then he threw them angrily to the ground. My pride was hurt. . . ."

THE INCIDENT requires some explanation to be understandable, but Agca's telling of it may be politically revealing. *Carsaf* and *Girgir*[12] are weekly humorous magazines published respectively by the newspapers *Hürriyet* and *Günaydin*, and enjoy a very wide circulation (at that time probably 70,000 and 250,000 respectively). They are non-partisan, but often impertinent and biting. In the mid-1970s they frequently poked fun at all political factions, and made light of pompous politicians who took their quarrels too seriously. The Turkish term for "crap" is *ot* (which means literally "hay" or "weeds")—it was a term of the 1970s used by Rightists for persons who were neither opponents nor supporters—i.e. were indifferent to political agitation or considered themselves above it.

Recalling this period, one Ankara University student said to me in the summer of 1981: "The worst thing was to try *not* to take sides; I didn't want to be either a Rightist or a Leftist, but I found myself being attacked by both extremes. I finally gave up and joined the Rightists so they could protect me against the Leftists." His roommate added: "Leftists and Rightists, who were both really minorities, terrorised all the rest of us. Now we are all in the centre—all Atatürkists again. We don't argue about politics. We study. And we have time for other things we didn't before: sports, music, hobbies and sex. It's a great relief. . . ."

Agca was never to experience this sense of relief. In contrast to these students, who represent the great majority in Turkey, he took a different course. Whoever first recruited him into terrorism locked him into a pattern from which he could not turn back.[13]

WHERE ELSE to look, whom else to talk to? I wandered in the streets of Malatya, browsed in shops, visited the local museums, took snacks at various eating-places, spent an evening at one of the two local night-clubs. I also went back for another chat with the governor. But there was precious little more forthcoming about Agca. People in

[11] Çaylan is said to have attended Yeşiltepe junior school at the same time as Agca, but he went to a different high school, Turan Emeksiz, in another part of the city. It was a regular academic multi-purpose high school. It is not known whether they were ever close friends or remained in contact during high school. It is very common in Turkey for students from the same city or province to form friendship groups and room together at universities, often developing ties they did not have in their home area.

[12] *Çarşaf* is the term for bedsheet or other traditional all-encompassing over-garment worn by traditional Muslim women when going outside their houses. *Girgir* is probably best translated as "snarl", which characterises the rude and impudent nature of much of its humour.

[13] In the months between the murder of Abdi Ipekçi (1 February 1979) and his attempt on the Pope (13 May 1981), Agca is suspected of having committed as many as four other murders, two in Turkey and two in West Germany.

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Malatya regret that "he gave our town a bad name." But they feel this too will pass, and they say that they are not overly concerned about what almost happened, its whys and wherefores.

But in Malatya one could at least learn, in sharp contrast to so much that has been misreported and over-analysed, what Mehmet Ali Agca was *not*. He was not a Muslim fanatic or a "grey wolf", not a rabid Rightist or an anti-modernist, not a hater of the cold world around him, not obviously ill or alienated, and certainly not mentally deficient. The quest in Malatya did not explain Agca as the murderer of Abdi Ipekçi in Istanbul, or as the would-be assassin of Pope John Paul II in front of the Vatican. Perhaps there was somewhere here—certainly there was later—a dark, even sinister side when Dostoevskean "demons" took possession. What would one not have given to have been able to look at the schoolboy poetry, to read the manuscript of the youthful novel!

When facts fail, fiction can (and doubtless will) take over. Still, so much we do know, here in his home town: that nothing he could have learned in Malatya—no example set for him here in his first eighteen years—could have made him want to spend months and years on a secret, devious, and circuitous road to Rome to assassinate the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Catholicism seemed to be as far from the everyday concerns of the people in Malatya as Zen Buddhism. Malatya explained much about the career of a young Turk of talents, but not how he came to carry a revolver in his knapsack, and nothing about the sources (and certainly not the resources) of his terrorist exploits. His end was not in his beginning. I close my quest for him in Malatya with the feeling, rueful and obvious, that he would have been better off if he had never left it.

Helicopter

We are leaving them behind, the children
who played in the dust for butterflies pinned on card,
for buttons or cartridge cases:
leaving, leaving them all, for faraway places
with faraway names. Overhead
a chopper, cropping our last contrition

as easily as a boy with a stick
dispatches thistleheads, riots a slow, roaring
descent to the embassy roof:
and one arrival rifles our silence of love,
of the truths we had been shoring
against our future. Now we are all sick.

We are leaving, leaving. Impolitic
to stay. Imprudent. Impossible. And the men
who biked the long hot dusty roads
to bring us the news, and carried our chosen loads
out of the last hotels, have gone,
knowing we're going. Now we are all sick.

We are sick in strange ways, and with a pain
we thought belonged in other lives; and we climb high
from the scene of our crimes, needing
escape from the heat, the helplessness, the bleeding,
battering to an angry sky
where thunder breeds, bringing releasing rain.

Michael Hulse

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Leszek Kolakowski

A General Theory of Sovietism

A Word about Dangers & Hopes

INTELLIGENT RUSSIANS who lived under the abominable régime of Nicholas I were in despair. The police-bureaucratic oppressiveness seemed unshakable and established for ever.

The combination of internal and international pressures was soon to prove that it was not so. In the slow but accelerating reform movement that started in the 1860s the "civil society" was asserting its rights and building economic, cultural, and political life forms independent from the state. The process of "Westernisation" continued, inexorably, for the next half-century; and the autocracy was heading, especially after the 1905 Revolution, towards a sort of constitutionalism, i.e. towards disaster. The Czars kept repeating slogans about their divine right to rule their subjects and to oppress the non-Russian nationalities—including the eternally indigestible Poland—but their voices sounded less and less self-confident, more and more ridiculous. In February 1917, when the autocracy fell apart—again, as a result of various war-related internal and external circumstances—almost no one was ready to stand up for it.

Bolshevism, from a later perspective, could have appeared as a terrible revenge of old barbarity against the encroachment of Western civilisation ("Tartar socialism", as Kautsky put it in 1919). Georges Sorel was the first, it seems, to have noticed that the Bolshevik Revolution was the restoration of the endogeneous tribal-Moscovite tradition against Westernising corruption and cosmopolitism, and he welcomed it on this very assumption. Lenin failed to notice that; to be sure, he knew the Hegelian theory analysis which asserted that the actors of historical processes are as a rule unaware of the real meaning of their own acts, yet he was incapable—not unlike everybody else, for that matter—of applying it to himself. He did observe, shortly before his death, that communism was being swamped by the tradition of Czarist bureaucracy; but it was not this casual doubt which he left to his successor as an ideological legacy. It was rather the self-righteousness of an empire that was built on an entirely new doctrinal basis and, by being progressive and thus always right by definition, had the right to conquer any country, to break any international agreement, and to use any means of oppression in order to establish and to expand its area of domination.

HOWEVER, it would be no less wrong to see in Sovietism nothing more than the extension of the Russian despotism and imperialism of old than to assert that Sovietism is merely a practical embodiment of Marxist doctrine. It is both; and though it is easy to point out particular elements deriving from the "ideological" or rather from the "national" tradition, it is not a simple mixture but a "New Civilisation", to use the title of the Webbs' book glorifying the Soviet Union at the very peak of Stalinist terror in the late 1930s (perhaps the most grotesque testimony to the monumental idiocy of communist fellow-travellers).

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Strongly-rooted historical patterns of social organisation display everywhere a remarkable refractoriness, to be sure, and they are capable of sneaking into, and surviving in, profoundly transformed political conditions. On the other hand the radical change in the principle of ideological legitimacy of power—from national, Russian, paternalist, traditional, religious to internationalist, progressist, futuristic, crudely atheistic, millenarist—was not simply phraseological, and it affected all areas of life. It cannot be dismissed as just an adoption of another self-glorifying idiom. The new ideology, called Marxism-Leninism, turned out to be very efficient not only in preventing the empire from crumbling but in renewing its expansive energy. The empire was able to expand as never before and to scatter its ideological outposts in various parts of the world in the form of communist movements. On the home front it succeeded in asserting to the ultimate extent the principle of the absolute priority of the state over its subjects by trying to convert into state-ownership everything, including people, their minds and memories, and every form of their activity, economic and cultural.

THE PRICE of success was not only impossibly heavy—it was self-defeating. The nationalist and religious self-definition of the *ancien régime*, however weakened and increasingly unconvincing, could have survived by the sheer inertia of tradition. By shedding this worn-out garment and replacing it with a brand new revolutionary messianism including the mythology of the "proletarian internationalism", the seemingly rejuvenated empire had to rely upon the vitality of its ideology which could not have persisted inertially. This vitality has been by now almost utterly exhausted, and the rulers desperately try to enrich it with ideological commodities taken from the old repository—imperial glory, racism, xenophobia—while keeping the communist principle of legitimacy intact. Otherwise they have to rely, as the main prop of stability, on the population's despair, apathy, fear, and ignorance—all of them called together the "highly developed socialist consciousness." The new order failed abysmally in all areas except three: army, secret police, and the huge machinery of mendacity, the later being obviously an indispensable condition of its strength. By using the massive lie, preventing its failures from being known and thus appearing much stronger than it is, the empire really *is* stronger. The lie, however, has become much less effective than it used to be and, as a result of ideological collapse, it is quite ineffective (if different from the sheer terror) inside the Soviet area of domination. The economic, social, cultural and ideological failures of Sovietism destroyed the tiny cover it once had in the form of its ideologically committed defenders.

THE EMPIRE will crumble. How it will crumble is, of course, a matter of utmost importance to the entire world, and many possibilities are open.

Nobody wishes it to crumble in an explosion which might engulf the earth. We can easily imagine a coincidence of various failures and tensions from which the Soviet oligarchy will seek to escape by violent, irrational, expansionist moves. The probability of such a solution is the greater, the more reasons they have to perceive the West as weak, uncertain, and torn asunder by internal squabbles. By encouraging this perception the European unilateral disarmament movement (for which I suggest the slogan: *better slave than brave*) increases the chances of an event which to avoid is its ostensible goal: a global war, resulting from Soviet miscalculations.

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We can imagine, secondly, such tensions leading to violent struggles within the ruling apparatus and ending with a sort of military dictatorship returning to a overtly nationalist imperial ideology. By discarding the communist principle of legitimacy, such a process would probably enhance the existing tensions to an unprecedented, very dangerous degree, and its outcome is entirely unpredictable.

We can imagine, thirdly, that the Soviet rulers, under the combined pressure of self-inflicted economic disasters and social tensions, will accept, however grudgingly, a genuine verifiable international disarmament plan and concentrate their efforts on a large-scale economic recovery, which they cannot achieve without a number of social and political reforms. This might conceivably usher in a process of gradual and non-explosive disintegration of the empire. Such a path, though the most desirable, is fraught with dangers as well. Everybody knows the great risk all despotic régimes incur when they try, under duress, to grow milder; this is not a safe prospect, only the safest possible.

Is it at all conceivable? Nobody can calculate its probability, and yet the example of Poland in 1980–81 showed how the unconceivable can occur. Certainly in Poland or Czechoslovakia (or in Hungary) Communism would fall apart within days without the Soviet threat, whereas the Russian despotism emerged and has been kept in force by internal forces alone. Yet the anti-totalitarian potential feeds everywhere on the same calamities which the totalitarian power inevitably brings about, and it can be released by many different kinds of internal and international crises. The very setback which the Polish movement sustained as a result of military dictatorship is to be seen only as an episode in the disintegration of the totalitarian empire; and this is indeed how the Poles see it.

The collapse of the Soviet empire, far from being the ruin of Russia, is the necessary condition of her cultural rebirth. It might turn out one day that Lenin's mummy in the Kremlin mausoleum is in fact made of wax.

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John Gohorry

A Letter to Lady Pecunia

Dear Lady,
My name probably won't mean very much
to you, although I regularly keep in touch
with your champagne breakfasts and intimate suppers,
being an avid reader of the quality newspapers.

I have followed your fortunes and your affairs
devotedly—studied your portfolios of shares
and investment accounts with building societies
like a distant suitor calculating the niceties

of advantage for his remote beloved's prosperity.
I have wished you every good wish that may be.
On your birthday and at all other festivals I am
prompt with my congratulatory telegram

—your engagements, weddings, family occasions
call up my willing and anonymous donations,
and although my discreet habit has been to rejoice
for you privately, sometimes my public voice

has defended your honour, one of the dividends
Virtue can count on from having loyal friends.
So when Scandal drags your good name through his filthy lists
I am the first to correct gossip columnists

with irate phonecalls and strongly worded letters;
respect is the proper stance towards one's betters.
I speak always for your reputation, with regard
for your honour only, not seeking my own reward.

But recently my own finances have hit a bad patch;
I haven't a single 50 pence piece left to scratch
the back of my chequebook with, let alone piles
of notes to pay gas or electricity bills.

Every day the post brings demands for my overdue
payments, final reminders, licences to renew,
and my bank manager is a usurious tyrant
wanting his pound of flesh with every bank statement

who to ensure a large overdraft enlarges
oppresses me with account and service charges.
It's not that I am extravagant, though I overspend
—I work hard, live a moderate life, make and mend

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with an old car, a few hens, a black and white TV
set, as thrifty and economical as you can be.
I do not go in for exotic holidays
in the Fortunate Isles, Manchuria, or the Canaries

but after careful scrutiny might decide
on a week in a rented caravan at the seaside.
The fact of the matter is that I have few vices
apart from tobacco and ignoring invoices;

I enjoy a monastic diet of bean soup and celery
—salt is the main constituent of my salary.
I never do anything and rarely go anywhere;
what else is there to do, living on fresh air?

It is to yourself then, Lady Moneybags, that I turn,
in the hope that thirty years faithful service will earn
recognition at last, and if not wealth untold,
at least some small supplement for my billfold.

I have sacrificed lustful daydreams, grotesque fantasies
of handstitched lapels, silk shirts and a white Mercedes,
lace tablecloths all set about with lapis lazuli
candlesticks, and at every meal fine Chablis

in a Victorian wine glass with a hollow stem
—let those that truly appreciate such things have them.
I renounce all corrupt and bizarre thoughts of sex
on a sprung mattress padded with cashed cheques,

the ecstatic surrender of counterfoils and gilt
edged securities under a luxury quilt
of exchequer bonds, matured policies and the rest
not wishing to overheat a humble nest.

For nothing exotic matches what is said
plainly between loving friends in a firm, hard bed,
while supine comfort yawns and generates
languid ennui where true love suffocates.

A modest request, then, for some of your favours;
freshen me up, resuscitate me with a few fivers,
a Girocheque maybe, containing a tax rebate,
a small brass handshake embossed with today's date,

a lottery ticket with three matching devices
or the pools win that always remedies a crisis,
a sudden windfall from a passing lorry,
any sound credit note issued "To John Gohorry",

a premium bond, a change of heart in banks,
for any one of these, my heartfelt thanks.

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Nikolai Tolstoy

The Klagenfurt Conspiracy

War Crimes & Diplomatic Secrets

"It is a matter of honour to us not to force a non-Communist prisoner-of-war to go back, to be murdered in Communist China. This is not a matter of argument, but one of the fundamental principles for which we fight and, if necessary, die."

WINSTON CHURCHILL to ANTHONY EDEN, the Foreign Secretary, on the fate of prisoners-of-war in Korea (1952). **Cabinet Papers, released under the 30-year-rule** (*Sunday Times*, 2 January 1983).

ON 6 March last year a Memorial to the Victims of Yalta was dedicated by the Bishop of London to "the thousands of innocent men, women and children from the Soviet Union and other Eastern European states who were imprisoned and died at the hands of Communist governments after their repatriation at the conclusion of the Second World War. . . ." The most moving moment was when the water for a fountain was turned on by Mrs Zoe Polanska-Palmer. At the age of sixteen she escaped from Dachau and made her way to the Cossack camp at Lienz in Austria. There she was badly injured (on 1 June 1945) when British troops were compelled to use violent methods to force Cossacks into cattle trucks for transportation to the camps of GULAG.

The tragic story of the Cossacks is now well known. Much less so is that of the Croats and other Yugoslavs, a group of whom bore placards at the service testifying to the equally grim fate of their people in the same region of Austria at that time. Probably few among the crowd present knew much of that tragedy, and certainly none could have been aware of the true nature of the mystery which has hung over the Yugoslav deportations ever since.

It is not possible or necessary to explain here the incredibly complicated situation that existed in Wartime Yugoslavia. In 1945 it was a country that had only existed for 26 years, and had come into existence as a result of factors that had little to do with the wishes of its inhabitants. As a reward for being on the winning side in the Great War, the little Kingdom of Serbia had been expanded threefold in 1919 into the newly-named "Yugoslavia." The extra territory had been carved out of defeated Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria, and the Allied Kingdom of Montenegro, and converted the old Serbia into what was undoubtedly the most heterogeneous state in Europe, if not in the world. The government in Belgrade ruled over Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Hungarians, Greeks, Montenegrins, Germans, and Albanians. Its inhabitants spoke a multiplicity of languages, used two separate alphabets, and by religious persuasion were divided between Catholics, Orthodox, and Muslims.

Oppressed for centuries by the Turks, the mountainous terrain was rocked by national and religious hatreds, dynastic quarrels, and blood-feuds. When the Germans invaded and conquered the country in 1941 it was not surprising that many Croats saw them as deliverers from a Serbian-dominated state they had never wished to join, and which in their eyes had treated them as second-class citizens. Most Yugoslavs, however, opposed the Germans vigorously. Initially opposition was focused on remnants of the defeated army, led by General Drazha Mihailovich whose followers became known as "Chetniks." Naturally Britain supported Mihailovich's guerrilla struggle, but was unable to provide material aid until the tide of war began to turn.

When the Germans invaded the USSR in June 1941, the Yugoslav Communist Party, led by Josip Broz Tito, also joined the armed struggle. (Up to that date they had obediently followed Stalin's instructions to accept his ally Hitler's occupation.) Tito's ultimate aim was uncompromising: once the Germans were defeated, Yugoslavia was to become a pure Communist state run on lines similar to those of Stalin's Russia. Despite the presence of the common enemy, there could be no compromise

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between the Communist partisans and the Chetniks, whose aim remained the restoration of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia; and Tito's men made war more ferociously on Mihailovich's men than they did on the Germans. Retaliation was swift to follow, and civil war raged alongside ferocious opposition to the Germans.

To the Allies, absorbed in the life-and-death struggle with Nazi Germany, quarrels among Yugoslavs were a matter of indifference. They were solely concerned with the question of inflicting maximum losses on the Germans, and whoever could assist in that was an ally. To this day there is continuing controversy over the respective nature of the Chetniks and the Partisans as combatants on the Allied side. A German "*Wanted*" notice of July 1943 offered equal rewards of 100,000 gold Reichsmarks for Mihailovich and Tito; and a year later similar offers were being made for Mihailovich alone. The British and Americans placed military missions with both leaders; but in February 1944 the decision was made to abandon Mihailovich and concentrate all support on Tito.

THIS DECISION was arrived at on purely pragmatic grounds of military expediency. Tito was believed to be "killing more Germans" while the Chetniks were held to be "dragging their feet" and even "collaborating with the enemy." In fact a large body of evidence suggests that the information fed to Winston Churchill and his advisers was being heavily "doctored" in favour of Tito by Communists operating in SOE at Cairo, MI6, and the BBC.[1] As the Third Reich began to crumble, the Chetniks and other non-Communist Yugoslavs grew desperate. In Eastern Europe the Soviets were demonstrating how they dealt with all opposition groups, and Tito had long understood the advantages of mass terror when dealing with opponents. His political police force, OZNA, modelled its methods on those of the Soviet NKVD, and soon gained as horrifying a reputation.

Whole sections of the population who were supposed to have supported the Germans or the Chetniks were doomed to condign punishment. As Milovan Djilas has written since, people were held

> "guilty not necessarily of having done something, but simply of having belonged to something . . . the judicial process seemed senseless, except in spectacular cases involving leaders: a court could not hand down hundreds, thousands of death sentences . . . OZNA, the secret police, was methodically tracking them down, spreading its dragnet, conducting arrests and executions."[2]

By the spring of 1945, as the Germans beat a fighting retreat from the country, an enormous exodus of terrified Yugoslavs tried to follow them over the frontier into Italy and Austria. There were Slovenian Home Guards, Serbian Volunteers, Montenegrin and Herzegovinian Chetniks, and vast numbers of Croat Home Guards and Ustashi. Among the latter must have been many who had committed War crimes when they were in the ascendancy; but the majority were very ordinary people fleeing an appalling fate.

AS THIS VAST FLOOD of refugees prepared to cross the River Drava into Austria, they encountered advance units of Field-Marshal Alexander's army which, following the German surrender, had raced through the Alpine passes into the Austrian province of Carinthia. The local commander gave hasty orders to try to stem this human flood-tide. Colonel Denys Worrall, then commanding a battalion of the Durham Light Infantry, recalls being ordered about 16 May 1945 to move his men down to the Drava near Bleiburg to prevent the Croats from crossing over and surrendering to the British.

> "I immediately put platoon posts and in some cases company posts, along that part of the Drava where they might cross. . . . I remember that I went down with my driver in a jeep to look round the posts to make certain that everything was all right. In the evening this tremendous flood of chaps came down the road, some of them mounted. I didn't know what to do! I went up to a chap and eventually persuaded him to get them to sit down, which they did. There were thousands of them: they weren't hostile at all, but they were armed. They just wanted to surrender to us, but our instructions were that they weren't to. Of course, if they'd really taken a dislike to me I couldn't have stopped them at all. Anyway, they agreed to go back and went back into Yugoslavia."

Large numbers were persuaded in this way to turn round and return to their fate, whatever that might

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[1] David Martin, *Patriot or Traitor: The Case of General Mihailovich* (Stanford, 1978), pp. 83–90, 99–117, 121–22, 140–41, 146, 148–50, 155, 182, 188–89.

[2] Milovan Djilas, *Wartime* (New York, 1977), pp. 419–20.

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be. Other large bodies, however, managed to penetrate the thinly-held British line and surrender. Once safely beyond the reach of Tito's partisans they were disarmed and permitted to set up a vast camp at Viktring, under the eyes of the British 5 Corps Headquarters at Klagenfurt.

However, the refugees were not to live there for long. Commanders of British units controlling the camps received orders in the third week of May that the Yugoslavs under their control were to be despatched back to their own country. As any knowledge of this move in the camps would undoubtedly arouse widespread revolt, difficult to suppress and impossible to contain, instructions were issued that deception was to be employed in luring the Yugoslavs on to transport. They were told, in many cases on the word of honour of British officers, that they were to be "moved to safety" in Italy.

It was this aspect of the orders that aroused particular revulsion. On 19 May, Colonel Robin Rose-Price of the Welsh Guards recorded angrily in his War Diary:

> "Evacuation of Croats begin. Order of most sinister duplicity received i.e. to send Croats to their foes i.e. TITS to Yugoslavia under the impression that they were to go to ITALY. Tit guards on trains hidden in guards van."[3]

The accompanying partisans were a particularly villainous-looking crew, and British troops were under no illusion that they were other than executioners. These apprehensions were all too well-founded.

AS SUCCESSIVE TRAIN- and truckloads of Yugoslavs from the camp at Viktring were handed over by their British captors to the Communist partisans an efficient operation sprang into motion. Trucks brought the unsuspecting refugees to a little railway station at Maria Elend, on the branch line from Klagenfurt leading to North Italy. The trains were already waiting at the station, and the Yugoslavs obediently clambered up into boxcars which were quietly bolted on the outside. The only detail which struck the passengers as odd was the absence of a railway engine. But one appeared shortly afterwards and was coupled on to the carriages. There was nothing about the engine to hint at its identity: it was in fact from Yugoslavia (the British authorities were not prepared to risk Yugoslav "socialisation" of one of their own locomotives). Nor were any suspicions aroused until it was far too late. This was when the train suddenly swung south on to a branch line at Rossenbach, whence a long tunnel passed under the mountains and into Yugoslavia.

Sudden dread gripped the prisoners as they swayed together in the rushing darkness. Could the British, despite all their plausibility and promises, really have been planning to betray them to their deadly enemies? Rude confirmation was provided at the next stop. They had at last emerged from the darkness and realised they were indeed in the hands of Tito.

AT Hrušica, the first stop beyond the tunnel on Yugoslav soil, armed partisans burst into the wagons containing officers and dragged 54 of them outside. There they were beaten savagely, and then taken to a nearby wood where they were shot or stabbed to death. All this was done with the full knowledge of an English liaison officer on board the train. At successive stations the train would stop again briefly to allow armed Communists to enter every wagon. Swearing and jostling, the Titoists murdered whom they chose, and plundered the prisoners of all their possessions, including most of their clothing. Crucifixes and other evidences of religious faith were spat upon and defiled.

The trains trundled south-east through the familiar Slovenian countryside until they arrived at St Vid, a suburb of the capital Ljubljana. There, half-clothed and subjected to repeated insults and brutalities, the surviving prisoners were marched to a huge improvised concentration camp around a former Roman Catholic seminary. As the British delivered more and more consignments, the numbers increased until thousands were crammed into the buildings and open area around. There were large numbers of Croats and Serbs, but the vast majority were Slovene Home Guards (*Domobrani*) who had taken the oath of loyalty to King Peter, still recognised by Britain as her ally and Head of the Yugoslav Government.

For four days the prisoners were held in the St Vid concentration camp, deprived of food and water and subject to further insults and brutalities. The worst of these was an incident where a sadistic female partisan (known as "Ela") personally stripped and flogged with her riding-crop a priest whom she found celebrating an improvised mass in

[3] WO.170/4982; Boriwoje M. Karapandžić, *Jugoslovensko krvavo proleće 1945: Titovi Katini i Gulazi* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1976), p. 34.

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the disused seminary cinema. But all this was as nothing compared with the fate that was now imminent. Units of Tito's secret police, OZNA, had built up an increasing presence; and on Monday, 28 May 1945, the prisoners were assembled and marched under guard back to the railway station. Soon they were rolling south again on a train that took them through sun-baked spruce forest up into the mountains of Mala Gora beyond Ljubljana.

At dawn next day they arrived at the war-shattered town of Kočevje where they were herded in section about two feet long. With grim efficiency house on the outskirts. All was very still, with scarcely any inhabitants of the town visible. A sudden chill gripped the men as they saw below them a large strip of forest that had been recently cleared of trees. There was scant time for reflection. In cellars below the house they were subjected to a final search, and then re-emerged to the great dining-room above. All round were armed partisans, while on the tables lay heaps of cut telephone cables, each section about two feet long. With grim efficiency each victim had his wrists wired together behind his back, and then they were tied securely together by the arm in pairs.

Now in groups of twenty the prisoners were herded on to trucks and taken down the hill to the clearing. Emerging from the trees, the trucks stopped, and the prisoners were dragged down and pushed stumbling forward into the open space. Communist machine-gunners, squatting under the trees, began their work. As the harsh staccato jabber of automatic fire shattered the forest stillness, the staggering figures blundered briefly, screaming and struggling with their shackled partners, before they fell dead upon the ground. The lorries arrived in continual succession, and gradually the clearing came to be covered first with scores, then with hundreds, and finally with thousands upon thousands of corpses. Among the heaps of slain there were bodies that continued to moan or heave; and Tito's commissars had to clamber over the mounds of their compatriots, firing with revolvers wherever some poor wretch showed signs of life. In strong contrast with the chaotic issues and disputes of Wartime Yugoslavia, this final bloody chapter was conducted with ruthless efficiency. But massacres on such a vast scale, in numbers dwarfing their infamous parallel at Katyn, could not be completely total.

BETWEEN 7 and 8,000 people appear to have been murdered at Kočevje, though one source puts it as high as 13,000. A tiny number of fortunates escaped, and it is their testimony which enables the tragedy to be described in detail.[4]

THE MASSACRES at Kočevje were but one of many taking place, and clearly only a highly-organised operational plan can account for the scale and efficiency of the killings in so short a space of time. In the last days of May, Slovenia became a slaughterhouse. The returned Slovenes and Serbian Chetniks were also taken to camps at Maribor and Dravograd, where many were savagely tortured: in the latter town 500 Chetniks had their throats cut and their corpses were flung into the river. The Metropolitan Joanikije was tortured to death at Arandjelovac. Todor Niletic, a Montenegrin peasant who managed to escape, "saw with my own eyes that the Partisans shot on that spot every man in the column and threw the corpses into the Sava River. . . ." His own son was among them. On one occasion, when local people objected to the indiscriminate slaughter, partisans boasted that they had written licence from the British to act as they did.

Some 20 or 30,000 Serbs and Slovenes died in this way. But these numbers were dwarfed by those of the Croats, whose armed forces had inflicted dreadful atrocities on the Serbs in an earlier phase of the War. Some 200,000 had been driven (by threats, not force) back across the Drava by the British, and a further 1,000 who had fallen into their custody were returned a week later. The Communists killed about 10,000 as soon as they laid hands on them. Their corpses were piled in some old entrenchments and blown up. Far worse was to come, in the form of "Tito's death marches." The remainder of the Croat exodus was marched under heavy guard into the interior. At every step the partisan and OZNA escorts continued firing indiscriminately into the massed columns, which included large numbers of women and children.

The largest of these columns was driven along the bank of the Drava as far as Maribor. As they continued so near the Austrian frontier, numbers escaped to tell the tale. The entire route was littered with an unbroken succession of corpses. At Ptij German anti-tank ditches were stacked with them, but it was at Maribor itself that the worst "Katyn" took place. There some 12,000 Croats were

[4] B. M. Karapandžić, *Jugoslovensko krvavo proleće* . . ., pp. 34–79, 168. An eyewitness account by a partisan officer who subsequently defected is preserved in FO.371/48920, 86–90.

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machine-gunned in droves and dumped in huge trenches.

> "The partisans started shooting at our backs [a miraculously-preserved survivor recalled]: fast as lightning, I threw myself on top of the dead bodies. More dead bodies fell on top of me. When the partisans finished shooting our group they withdrew. They did not bury us because there was room for more. So they went to Maribor for more victims. I untied myself from my dead partner and crawled out of this mass grave. I was naked, covered with the blood of the victims, and so frightened I could scarcely walk."

He hid up a tree and escaped later.

THE OTHER COLUMNS endured similar cruelties, generally with the same violent ending. Near Samobor, priests and officers were picked out of the ranks and dragged alongside by vehicles until their corpses had been battered into shapeless bloody bundles. This was the speciality of the troops of the partisan leader Koca Popovic. Of another body of thousands driven towards Split on the Adriatic, precisely three survived. Altogether, it is believed that the vast majority of the 200,000 Croats driven back or handed over by the British Army in Austria were killed within a few days. Those few who survived and did not escape the country ended up in Tito's concentration camps. News of what these were like trickled out to the Red Cross later in the year. It was learned that one camp near Pettan held 16,000 inmates, mostly women and children.

> "Within two months about 1,500 persons are said to have died, mostly children under three. A great deal of cruelty seems to have gone on, emanating from the Commandant of the Camp and the Kommissars on duty—beating, standing in rain or sun, women being thrashed by men for trivial things—and there appears to be terrific overcrowding and the most appallingly unsanitary conditions, with a starvation diet. The reports are some of the worst I have read and that is saying a good deal, as you can imagine."

So wrote Miss S. J. Warner of the British Red Cross.[5]

[5] B. M. Karapandžić, *Jugoslovensko krvavo proleće* . . ., pp. 168–74, 182–232; FO.371/48825, 63–64, 73–75; FO.371/48894, 95–96. The total number of Croats cannot be fixed with certainty. It was well over 100,000 (cf. Karapandžić, pp. 224–25).

THE SURVIVORS' STORIES of this colossal massacre have since been largely confirmed by Milovan Djilas (*Wartime*, pp. 446–47).

> "Along with the Germans, our enemies who collaborated with the invaders or bound their destiny to the fascist powers—the Chetniks, the Ustashi Home Guards, and the Slovenian Home Guards—also laid down their arms. Some of these groups got through to the British in Austria, who turned them over to us. All were killed, except for women and young people who were under eighteen years of age—so we were told at the time in Montenegro, and so I later heard from those who had taken part in these senseless acts of wrathful retribution. These killings were sheer frenzy. How many victims were there? I believe that no one knows exactly, or will ever know. According to what I heard in passing from a few officials involved in that settling of scores, the number exceeds twenty thousand—though it must certainly be under thirty thousand, including all three of the groups just cited. They were killed separately, each group on the territory where they had been taken prisoner. A year or two later, there was grumbling in the Slovenian Central Committee that they had trouble with the peasants from those areas, because underground rivers were casting up bodies. They also said that piles of corpses were heaving up as they rotted in shallow mass graves, so that the very earth seemed to breathe. . . ."

This last problem was mitigated on occasion by treating the soil with an alkali and a further layer of soil; tanks were then driven back and forth across the site.

THE ultimate responsibility for all this cruelty lay with Tito and the Yugoslav Communist Party. According to an *émigré* source a direct order was issued in Tito's name to the gaunt, vindictive head of the Serbian OZNA, Colonel Slobodan Penezic. Djilas believed

> "that a written order didn't exist. Given the power structure and the chain of command, no one could have carried out such a major undertaking without approval from the top. An atmosphere of revenge prevailed. . . ."

And more recently he speculated, "Whether or not Tito had given direct orders no one knows. But certainly he was in favour of a radical solution—for

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pragmatic reasons, as the British, too, had pragmatic reasons for returning these refugees."

There are other reasons for concluding that the slaughter was a deliberate and carefully planned piece of Party policy. As the Nazis and Soviets discovered, mass executions involve a great deal of work and thought. The speed with which Tito's killings took place is one significant factor. Another was the well-organised location of suitable mass graves, chosen or prepared well in advance. Then again, there is the independently attested unusual method of wiring victims together in pairs. There can be no doubt that this was a war crime of the first magnitude, one bearing all the hallmarks established on a vaster, though no more barbaric, scale by the Nazis and Soviets. It is clearly beside the question to say that many Croats had probably been Ustashis responsible for equally terrible crimes when they held the upper hand. Such an argument would justify German atrocities in Russia, and vice versa, and can only betray the essential inhumanity of its proponent. Wickedness is not such a complicated business as some would have us believe. Besides, as Djilas points out,

> "The great majority of the people the British forced back from Austria were simple peasants. They had no murders on their hands. They had not been Ustashis or Slovenian 'Home Guards.' Their only crime was fear of Communism and the reputation of the Communists. Their sole motivation for leaving the country was panic. If the British had handed over to us 'Quisling' leaders such as Nedic, and police-agents who had collaborated with the Nazis in torturing and killing people, or had done it on their own, there could be no question of the morality of the British action. But this is not what they did. They forced back the lot—and this was profoundly wrong."[6]

DJILAS'S last remark conveniently brings us to the central issue of the present story.

Why *did* Britain return the wretched fugitives, many of whom had fought as her allies against the Germans, to certain death? For there is no doubt that the British concerned in the affair knew full well what would be the fate of anyone they forced back across the frontier. On 7 May the German Commander South-east, General von Löhr, had appealed to the Anglo-American AFHQ in Italy to allow the Croats to surrender and find asylum with them, otherwise

> "one would have to expect the most horrible massacres in North Croatia of the Croat population. . . . That the people of any nation should be tortured and murdered merely because of having collaborated with Germany is considered to be barbarous and must be fought with all moral and material means."

The telegram was passed up to US General Mark Clark and Field-Marshal Alexander.[7]

In fact there is no doubt that the majority of British officers were under no illusions as to what was likely to happen to anyone they returned, and (as will be seen shortly) Field-Marshal Alexander emphasised strongly that their lives would be endangered if they were returned to Yugoslavia. Why, therefore, the British committed such an act of clear and massive inhumanity is mysterious. The Yugoslav régime, while grateful for the unexpected offering, was also puzzled. "To be quite frank with you", Djilas recalled in 1979,

> "we didn't at all understand why the British insisted on returning these people. . . . I think they ought to have had a pretty shrewd idea of what we'd be doing with them. We had a British Military Mission attached to us. Its members could have entertained no doubt as to how the Ustashis and Chetniks were treating us, and how we were treating their captured men and, in fact, anyone we remotely suspected of supporting them. But the British preferred to shut their eyes." [8]

The epithet "British" must, as employed here, be used in a restricted sense. That the British people at large knew nothing of the matter goes without saying. What is much more surprising is the fact that the Cabinet, the Foreign Office, and the War Office were also ignorant. With German and Soviet War crimes there was always a general, and usually a specific, political "licence to kill" handed down from above. The Yugoslav handovers enjoyed no such authority. Who, then, made the decision that resulted in such a welter of death, cruelty and despair?

THE QUESTION of responsibility was put within a year of the event by the Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar, Dr Harold Buxton, who wrote on 9 May 1946

[6] *Wartime*, p. 449; George Urban, "A Conversation with Milovan Djilas", ENCOUNTER (December, 1979), p. 42; Karapandžić, *Jugoslovensko krvavo proleće . . .*, p. 46.

[7] WO.204/1596.

[8] ENCOUNTER (December 1979), pp. 41–42.

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to *The Times*, raising the issue of British military complicity in the massacres. He had received a circumstantial account of the operation from his nephew, Francis Scott, who in the previous year had been serving as an officer in Carinthia. Scott explained:

> "Our orders were to disarm any Chetniks whom we caught crossing the frontier, to take great care that they were not told where they were going, and then to take them back to a different part of the frontier and hand them back unarmed to the Communists from whom they had just escaped. This hardly seemed to most of us to be in accord with the best British principles of fair play but as soldiers we had to obey orders which we were told emanated from Whitehall. . . . [The Yugoslavs] were all certain that they would be shot if they were [sent back]."

The Bishop passed his nephew's account on to an M.P., Professor Douglas Savory, who in turn forwarded it to Hector McNeill, Ernest Bevin's deputy at the Foreign Office. McNeill called for an investigation, but soon found himself encountering that protective veil of obscurity which has surrounded the business ever since. The Refugee Department of the Foreign Office knew nothing of the matter, suggesting only that "there might have been some kind of slip-up about the orders", but went on to stress that, apart from the Ustashi ("who deserve all they will get"), the Croats returned "were quite innocent." For the Southern Department, responsible for Yugoslav affairs, John Colville wrote emphatically that

> "We have made specific enquiries of the military authorities in Vienna who have denied that they have handed over anybody except escaped Prisoners of War and deserters. . . . There may of course have been isolated cases which were hushed up and which never got back to Headquarters but there has never been any order from Whitehall of the kind suggested in Mr. Francis Scott's irresponsible letter."

In his reply to Professor Savory, Hector McNeill echoed this information, stressing that if anything like what Scott alleged had really occurred, then *"the matter has been so effectively hushed up that no word of it has ever reached the military authorities at Vienna or the Foreign Office."*[9] (Italics added.)

THERE CAN BE no question that this is precisely what happened. The operation had in fact been even larger and bloodier than Francis Scott suspected, and he and his fellow-officers were clearly being deceived when they were told that the orders emanated from Whitehall. Since the introduction of the 30-year rule it has been possible to examine these orders; and it is worth turning to them now to see what light they throw upon the matter.

THE SURRENDER of the Yugoslavs to the British and their subsequent forced repatriation are fully recorded in the War Diaries of the British Command in Carinthia at the time. This was 5 Corps of the Eighth Army in Occupied Austria, commanded by Lieutenant-General Charles Keightley from Headquarters in Klagenfurt. 6 Armoured Division occupied the area bordering the Yugoslav frontier to which the refugees had fled. By 3 May, 6 Armoured Division's commanding officer had already accepted the surrender of a Chetnik army of 12,000 men. In his report, General Murray explained that the force "includes a considerable number of women and children." When he explained that he wished them to move to an internment area further from the Yugoslav frontier,

> "they agreed that a movement away from Tito's troops was highly desirable. They were, however, very much concerned with their ultimate fate. They feared that we might hand them over to Tito, in which case they were quite clear what their fate would be. They foresaw mass executions, which might or might not be true.[10] I was advised that applications had been made by Tito to the British Government from time to time for the extradition of his opponents, all of which had been refused."

General Murray concluded by noting that "In my dealings with the Chetniks I formed a favourable impression of their honesty and sincerity. They were well satisfied that being in British hands, they would get a square deal." Clearly he found these large bodies of internees an administrative embarrassment, but equally clearly he did not envisage mass murder as an answer to the problem. He could not "imagine the British Government would ever agree to such a suggestion."[11] Nor indeed did it, but nevertheless the handovers and predicted massacres took place.

[9] FO.371/59468, 19–26.

[10] General Murray assures me that in fact he had no illusions as to what their fate would be.

[11] WO.170/4337.

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WITH THE COLLAPSE of Germany and the arrival of British forces in north-east Italy and southern Austria a serious dispute had broken out between Tito's newly-imposed Communist government in Yugoslavia and the Anglo-Americans. Tito claimed for Yugoslavia the important port of Trieste, on the spurious grounds that his troops had liberated it, and because it had belonged to that part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which Yugoslavia felt entitled to inherit. In Carinthia, too, the presence of a Slovene minority led Tito to make further territorial claims. Large bodies of ill-disciplined partisans infiltrated both regions, causing serious embarrassment to the British administration. It is not known to what extent this pressing problem was linked with the fate of the refugees.

On 17 May a "SECRET" 5 Corps order was issued to divisional commanders to the effect that "all JUGOSLAV nationals at present in the CORPS area will be handed over to the Tito forces as soon as possible. These forces will be disarmed immediately but will *not* be told of their destination." This order was signed by Toby Low, Brigadier General Staff to General Keightley. Two days later, at seven o'clock in the evening of 19 May 1945, Low held a meeting with Colonel Ivanovich, Deputy Commander of the Third Yugoslav Army. There it was agreed, firstly, that all Yugoslav troops would withdraw south of the Austrian frontier within two days; and, secondly, that

> "5 CORPS will return all YUGOSLAV NATIONALS now in the CORPS area who had been fighting in uniform with the GERMANS and their camp followers . . . total approximately 18,585 of whom 3,010 already evacuated to 4 YUGOSLAV ARMY."

That very day a thousand Croats were handed over at Rosenbach, and these evacuations, as the War Diaries record, continued daily until the end of the month.[12]

SO MUCH is clear. It was Brigadier Toby Low (now Lord Aldington) who actually arranged the refugees' delivery to Tito's people, but of course he was acting on behalf of the Corps Commander, Charles Keightley. It is when we reach Keightley that the mystery begins. It is certain that he intended the operation to be shrouded in obscurity; but it is the historian's duty to attempt to penetrate the veil. At the time Keightley denied that any involuntary repatriations had taken place at all. According to his account,

> "there were a considerable number of Yugoslav Displaced Persons (not soldiers), they were asked if they were prepared to return to Yugoslavia, and expressed themselves quite willing, in fact volunteered and were accordingly sent off by train and lorry. After they had got into Yugoslavia, six of them dribbled back and said that the moment they crossed a bridge, they were all machine-gunned. On this information being received, no further evacuations to Yugoslavia were made, except where the people expressed themselves anxious and willing to go. . . ."[13]

Keightley was lying, of course; but the central question at issue is what, if any, authority Keightley had received for his callous treatment of the refugees. There are gaps in the evidence, but it must be said at once that it is extremely unlikely that he would have taken action on a matter of such importance without consulting his superiors. It was, moreover, a political decision and one of particular significance at that moment, for Tito's truculent attitude over Trieste and Carinthia had led to a serious consideration of the possibility of war between the Communist Yugoslavs and Field-Marshal Alexander's forces.

IF SUCH AN EXIGENCY occurred, the *émigré* Croat, Slovene and Chetnik troops to whom the British had provided asylum would become a focus of considerable significance. From one angle they could be regarded as an embarrassment or an actual nuisance, acting as an unnecessary provocation to Tito and causing a serious drain on scarce resources through their need for guards and supplies. From another angle, however, they might be looked upon as exceptionally valuable auxiliaries, hating Tito's régime and possessing a potential for transforming any future war into a Yugoslav civil war. The latter view was indeed that of Tito's *Politburo*. As Djilas recalled, "some of us even feared that they [the British] would enlist them for future use against Communist governments, especially our own. Yet, to our great surprise, they did none of these things but delivered them into our hands. . . .[14] The same idea should have passed through the mind of any British commander appraised of the situation.

It may be, of course, that the refugees were

[12] WO.170/4241; WO.170/4243; WO.170/4337; WO.170/4241.

[13] FO.371/51227.

[14] ENCOUNTER (December, 1979), p. 41.

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returned in direct exchange for Tito's evacuation of the disputed territory. As these were indeed the two matters settled on 19 May by Brigadier Low and Colonel Ivanovic, it is possible that we have here the real motive for the handovers. Be that as it may, these negotiations again were of a crucially *political* nature, involving questions of peace and war, and the frontiers between nations. At any point the delicate exchange might have broken down, turned sour, or taken some other unexpected turn; and Keightley would have been rash beyond belief had he arranged all this without higher authority.

Nor does Keightley's own character suggest he was the man to take pointless risks where his own career was at stake. He was a tough, ambitious, capable officer; a bit of a martinet and bully, but very conscious of a soldier's duty to fulfil instructions to the letter. Brigadier C. E. Tryon-Wilson, who was then on Keightley's staff, has confirmed to me that it is inconceivable that anyone at 5 Corps Headquarters would have taken the risk of going beyond instructions.

IT IS IN FACT the question of Keightley's instructions that is the most baffling, tantalising, or suggestive in the whole enigma. As recently as 29 April 1945, Prime Minister Winston Churchill had issued a firm instruction to the Foreign Office with regard to "anti-partisan Yugoslav Forces when the 15th Army Group make contact with them." The Prime Minister ruled that, "There is no doubt that . . . they should be disarmed and placed in refugee camps, as this is the only possible solution." Following this, at the beginning of May, Field-Marshal Alexander had issued instructions that "dissident or quisling troops of Yugoslav origin in Venezia Giulia . . . will be treated as disarmed hostile troops." Both instructions were in accordance with an important Combined Chiefs of Staff directive of 9 August 1944. As a Foreign Office official minuted later, while Alexander's words "implied that Yugoslavs captured as prisoners of war should not be returned to Yugoslavia, there is no explicit direction to this effect."[15]

Next, on 17 May 1945, the very day on which Brigadier Low issued orders for *"all Jugoslav nationals* [to] *be handed over to Tito forces as soon as possible"*, Alexander sent telegrams to the War Office and General Eisenhower at SHAEF. In these he stated that 25,000 Croats and 24,000 Slovenes had already surrendered to his forces, with an estimated 200,000 still pouring in. There were also huge numbers of Germans, Hungarians, and Cossacks. He explained that "with possibility of hostilities in Austria against Jugoslavs it is essential to free my L.[ine] of C.[ommunications] immediately from this embarrassment." He requested urgently that this pressure be slackened by Eisenhower's acceptance of the Germans and Cossacks under SHAEF control in Germany. The Croats and Slovenes, however, he felt he could "deal with . . . to the best of my ability with my own resources." If Eisenhower declined to help, then "*the only alternative is that . . . I shall be compelled to disband them* [the Germans and Cossacks]" (italics added). There was clearly at this stage no question in Alexander's mind of handing anyone over to be killed, least of all the Yugoslavs.

The same day (17 May) Field-Marshal Alexander sent a further telegram to the Combined Chiefs of Staff, urgently requiring directions "regarding final disposal" of "the Cossacks, Chetniks and Croats." His concluding words emphatically prove again that the possibility of inhumane action against these categories was remote from his mind:

> "In each of above cases to return them to their country of origin immediately might be fatal to their health. Request decision as early as possible as to final disposal."[16]

The Chiefs of Staff at once took up the subject-matter of this telegram with the Foreign Office. They felt that "while the Chetniks should be retained as disarmed hostile troops, the Croatian Ustasa should be pushed back into Yugoslavia." But the US Chiefs of Staff disagreed even with this, and the Foreign Office "accepted their view that in the first instance all Yugoslav quisling formations should be treated alike and retained." This discussion took some time, and it was not until 20 June that Alexander at last received his reply:

> "It is not possible to give you any decision at this time concernng final disposal of the Chetniks and

[15] FO.371/48920, 122; WO.106/4346, 23A. I am grateful to Mr Staniša R. Vlahovič for supplying me with a copy of the Prime Minister's minute (PREM 3/495/6, 124). In fact Sir Orme Sargent at the Foreign Office had already accepted that "we must agree to" internment as the only possible course (PREM 3/495/6, 125–26). On 2 May the US Acting Secretary of State approved the policy urged by Churchill and the Foreign Office (*Foreign Relations of the United States: Diplomatic Papers 1945*, Washington, 1961, pp. 1226–27).

[16] WO.106/4059, 371, 372.

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German Croat troops. This matter is presently under consideration by the U.S. and British Governments. For the time being however you will continue to retain such personnel in your custody and to handle them in accordance with existing instruction. . . ."

It is clear beyond contestation from this exchange of telegrams that on moral grounds Alexander was opposed to returning the Croats and Chetniks to Tito, and he received explicit instructions from his superiors in London and Washington not to do so.

All the Foreign Office ever learned of the matter was that "while the question of principle was under discussion", 5 Corps had "agreed to hand over Croats to Yugoslavia and 900 Croats were transferred on the 24th May." It was presumed that this "was, of course, a ghastly mistake which was rectified as soon as it was reported to headquarters." In fact 450 Croats and 1,000 Slovenes were handed over on 24 May; the process continued unhindered for a week; and this snippet read uncommonly like a skilful piece of disinformation emanating from 5 Corps Headquarters.[17]

ONE THING IS CLEAR: if Field-Marshal Alexander gave General Keightley the order to surrender the Yugoslavs to Tito, he did *not* do so merely on his own authority. Three independent sources confirm that he could not and did not do so.

1. The series of telegrams already quoted shows that Alexander felt a strong moral repugnance to any handover, and that he sought advice as to what should be done about the problem from SHAEF Headquarters, the War Office, and the Combined Chiefs of Staff. The replies categorically forbade any forcible handover.

2. The subsequent Foreign Office enquiry established that no orders had been given from London and, in the absence of any satisfactory explanation, could only assume that "a ghastly mistake" had occurred.

3. In reply to private enquiries (made in 1962 and 1963), Alexander explained clearly and correctly that he had been "responsible for the safeguarding and administration of all prisoners who had surrendered, *but the ultimate disposal of such prisoners was entirely a matter for the Allied Authorities*."

Alexander's memory is borne out by the orders. On 3 May 1945, 8th Army Operation Instruction No. 1465 laid down that

"Chetniks, troops of Mihailovitch and other dissident Yugoslavs . . . will be regarded as surrendered personnel and will be treated accordingly. The ultimate disposal of these personnel will be decided on Government levels."[18]

That is to say, by those who possessed authority to order the Field-Marshal to fulfil a *political* instruction. As the Foreign Office, War Office, and Combined Chiefs of Staff are ruled out in this capacity, we are seemingly left with only one figure possessing the power to make a political decision of this sort. This was the highly experienced and able Minister Resident in the Mediterranean, Harold Macmillan, whose job it was to advise and, if necessary, act in a political capacity in the Mediterranean theatre. His powers were considerable; and in the previous year he had annoyed the Foreign Secretary by exceeding them when "interfering with Italian and Balkan affairs." He also (as Eden claimed) "usurped functions" properly exercised by the Foreign Office.[19]

HAROLD MACMILLAN has consistently refused to discuss his responsibility for the British handovers of Cossacks and Yugoslavs from Austria and Italy; but enough evidence exists to make a fair appraisal of his role in the affair.

On 12 May 1945 Macmillan telegraphed the Foreign Office to say that

"At Field-Marshal Alexander's suggestion I am making a short visit to 8th Army Headquarters and 13th Corps tomorrow in order to put Generals McCreery and Harding fully in the picture. I hope to be back early on morning of May 13th."

But instead of returning to Caserta on the Sunday as planned, Macmillan flew north to General Keightley's Headquarters. It is likely that Keightley had contacted him, indicating that he had an awkward problem on his hands.

At Klagenfurt Keightley and Macmillan conferred, with Brigadier Toby Low supplying factual details. Keightley explained that contact had been

[17] FO.371/48825,19; FO.371/48920, 122-23; WO. 106/4059,397A; FO.371/48920,91; WO.170/4337, 16.

[18] Letters of 17 August 1962 (to Marvin Lyons) and 12 February 1963 (to Sven Steenberg). I am indebted to Mr Lyons and to Mr Stanislav A. Ausky for photocopies of these letters. Cf. WO.170/4183.

[19] Kenneth Young (ed.), *The Diaries of Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart* (London, 1980), pp. 328, 519-20.

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made with the Red Army to the north-east. However, he added, "no trouble is anticipated here although the Russians have advanced into what technically is our zone. . . ." The infiltrating Yugoslavs were troublesome, but could be contained "until he [Keightley] is strong enough to clear up the whole of his area." However, he was not in a position to risk serious clashes. So far so good. As Macmillan reported two days later,

> "the chief object of visiting them was because Field-Marshal Alexander thought it would do good to put them in the political picture. This I did and I think it was useful."[20]

Differences with Tito's troops were a matter of serious concern, but did not at this stage require instant decisions. What did was the embarrassing matter of the Cossacks and fugitive Yugoslavs, whom Stalin and Tito were anxious to recover and deal with in their normal bloody manner. Both matters were raised at the meeting and discussed in some detail. A full account of what passed between Macmillan and Keightley has not been preserved. Of those closely concerned, General Keightley died before enquiries could be put to him. Lord Aldington says that he has forgotten every detail. Brigadier Tryon-Wilson explains that he is too busy to discuss the matter, though he may do so one day, and Mr Macmillan consistently, and without explanation, refuses to do so. Nevertheless, just as one or two men amazingly escaped Tito's massacres in Yugoslavia, so scraps of evidence have been retrieved which enable the exchange to be reconstructed.

IN PREPARING his published memoirs, *Tides of Fortune*, Harold Macmillan provided research assistants with the very full diaries he kept in 1945. He generally wrote the entries on the same (or, at latest, the next) day as the event described. It is scarcely surprising that, with more than twenty years of crowded public life intervening, Mr Macmillan should have omitted to check the entry for one day in May 1945 as carefully as he might have done. The forcible return of the Cossacks and Yugoslavs was quite unknown to the general public; and it must have seemed that it had long before slipped away in the absence of documentation which would reveal the facts.

Firstly, as the Macmillan diary recalled, the question of "about 40,000 Cossacks and White Russians with their wives and children" was discussed. The Soviets demanded all (including the White Russians, who could not under international law legally be surrendered, and who in consequence were not covered by the Yalta Agreement). Mr Macmillan was anxious, for reasons he will not reveal and which can therefore only be guessed at, to comply with the Soviet demand in its entirety. It was agreed between the General and the Resident Minister that the White Russians should secretly be included among the returning Cossacks; and that this part of the deal should be concealed from Field-Marshal Alexander and officers conducting the operations in the field, whose consciences were feared to be less pliable. General Keightley accordingly suppressed any reference to the White Russians in his telegram to Alexander next day; while Macmillan must have agreed to back the subterfuge with a lie if, as was most likely, Alexander consulted him over the Cossacks' status and citizenship. All this I have described elsewhere,[21] and it is not necessary to elaborate it all here.

Next (still continuing his diary record) Mr Macmillan's published account moves on to describe the remaining part of the discussion.

> "Among the refugees were many thousands of Ustashi or Chetniks (anti-Communist Yugoslavs), mostly with wives and children, fleeing in panic into the area in front of Tito's advancing troops. These included [diary extract follow] anything from guerrilla forces raised by the Germans from Slovenes and Croats and Serbs to fight Tito, and armed and maintained by the Germans; to people who, either because they are Roman Catholics or Conservative in politics, or for whatever cause are out of sympathy with revolutionary Communism and therefore labelled as Fascists or Nazis. (This is a very simple formula, which in a modified form is being tried, I observe, in English politics.)
>
> The visit [to Keightley] impressed upon me once more the turmoil and misery resulting from war. It was heart-breaking; but we could do nothing to mitigate the suffering of all these unhappy people."[22]

All this was very moving stuff, and accorded well with the image Harold Macmillan cultivated of the world-weary Edwardian statesman, lone survivor from an age when higher standards prevailed. As

[20] WO.106/4059, 340, 341, 355.
[21] *Stalin's Secret War* (London, 1981), pp. 295–327.
[22] Harold Macmillan, *Tides of Fortune: 1945–1955* (London, 1969), pp. 17–18.

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his American counterpart, Ambassador Robert Murphy, put it,

> "Macmillan—in dignity, voice, manners, dress, and personality—was and still is almost the American popular image of an English gentleman."[23]

AT LONG LAST I have been able to lay hands on a copy of Harold Macmillan's report to the Foreign Office on his meeting with General Keightley. Apparently missing from the Foreign Office files in the Public Record Office, a copy has turned up from the records of the Directorate of Military Operations. Despatched at 5.20 pm on 15 May 1945, two days after Macmillan's return to AFHQ at Caserta, it is remarkable for what it does *not* reveal. In his diary Macmillan at this very time recorded the Soviet demand for the 40,000 Cossacks held by Keightley's troops, including non-repatriable White Russians. To the Foreign Office Macmillan reported that "In North Carinthia there is a pocket of some 30 [*sic*] Cossacks including women and children." As for the "many thousands of . . . anti-Communist Yugoslavs", whose fate had loomed so large in the 13 May discussion—all reference to them is entirely omitted.[24]

The omission can only have been deliberate, in view of the urgency of coming to a decision over this important matter. That the Cossacks were mentioned at all, even in this grotesquely garbled version, was probably due to the fact that, as Soviet citizens, the majority would be liable for return (under the Yalta Agreement), whether Field-Marshal Alexander liked it or not. The Yugoslavs, on the other hand, were a very different matter; and their very presence in the British zone had to be concealed. Not only was there no agreement covering their forcible return, but they were citizens of an Allied nation, many of whom had served in an Allied army since a time when Stalin and Tito had been Hitler's friends. With regard to them, most British statesman and soldiers would have echoed in all sincerity the pious sentiments Mr Macmillan enshrined in his diary for future publication; and, as has been shown, there was no possible chance of gaining official authority for their surrender to the tender mercies of Tito's political police, OZNA. The only likely explanation seems to be that Mr Macmillan was anxious to conceal the existence of the Yugoslav refugee problem from the Foreign Office, while he and General Keightley arranged a swift *fait accompli* ("a ghastly mistake") on the ground.

For, on 14 May 1945, the day after Harold Macmillan flew back from Klagenfurt, Lt-General Sir Brian Robertson, Chief Administrative Officer at Allied Forces HQ, issued a directive to the 8th Army to the effect that "all surrendered personnel of established YUGOSLAV nationality who were serving in German forces should be disarmed and handed over to YUGOSLAV forces." Though it reversed all existing instructions and pre-empted Alexander's enquiries, it seems that Mr Macmillan had used his authority at AFHQ to push this order through.

Meanwhile Robertson had asked Alexander C. Kirk, US Political Adviser at AFHQ, whether the US concurred with this new policy of forced repatriation of anti-Communist Yugoslavs. Kirk declined to reply until he had received authority from the State Department. Next day (15 May) the State Department replied firmly that:

> ". . . we are strongly of the opinion that such contemplated violation of agreed Anglo-American policy cannot be justified on grounds of administrative expediency."

This ruling was passed at once by Kirk to Harold Macmillan and Supreme Allied Command at Caserta. As has been seen, it was discreetly ignored, and the operation continued unchecked. So secretive was this move that it was not until 4 August (nearly three months later) that the US authorities discovered that large-scale hand overs, reportedly resulting in "mass murder", had in fact taken place.[25]

It was Field-Marshal Alexander who intervened to reverse the instruction on 23 May:

> "This supersedes FX79968 of 22 May [a document apparently missing from the files]. No JUGOSLAVS who have come into the hands of Allied Troops will be returned direct to JUGOSLAVIA or handed over to JUGOSLAV TPS against their will."[26]

The Field-Marshal clearly believed his order would be obeyed, and on the same day the US State Department was assured that "Under no circumstances will Yugos who are in custody of Allied troops be returned to Yugo."[27]

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[23] Robert Murphy, *Diplomat Among Warriors* (London, 1964), p. 206.
[24] WO.106/4059, 341.
[25] *Foreign Relations . . . 1945*, V, pp. 1246–47.
[26] WO.170/4184, 569, 972.
[27] *Foreign Relations . . . 1945*, V, p. 1227.

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But General Keightley, possessing Macmillan's authority, totally ignored this order and continued using force to repatriate Jugoslavs until the end of the month. It was not until Macmillan had flown home for good that Alexander was able to prevent any further use of force. Discovering that (despite his clear instruction of 23 May) deportations were continuing, he issued on 4 June a firm

> "New Army policy respective Yugoslavs effective forthwith: *1.* No Yugoslavs will be returned to Yugoslavia or handed over to Yugoslav troops against their will."

On the same day he put out a similar order forbidding further forcible handovers of Cossacks—an order which has disappeared from the files, though its existence is confirmed by a Cossack witness.[28]

When the Americans finally learned in August of the bloody aftermath of Macmillan and Keightley's 13 May discussion at Klagenfurt, their Political Adviser at Caserta again addressed a strong protest to Field-Marshal Alexander, Macmillan being no longer in office. In reply, Alexander's Deputy Chief of Staff "pointed out that British Resident Minister had concurred in proposed action", but as a good soldier he accepted his own responsibility in authorising the operation. Kirk was however by now fully apprised as to whose was the real responsibility, and noted emphatically "that Resident Minister acted contrary to policy agreed upon after consultation by Department and Foreign Office."[29]

It is a curious fact that Kirk's notes—and the relevant replies and minutes from AFHQ—have disappeared from the appropriate files now accessible in the Public Record Office; and it must surely be a matter of public concern that documents of this importance have apparently been tampered with before deposition.

HAROLD MACMILLAN could of course clear up any lingering mystery still hanging over this brutal episode, the Yugoslav "Katyn." Despite repeated requests over a period of years he has declined to discuss the matter with me—on the grounds that he does not comment on matters of public policy with which he was concerned. This is perhaps not altogether candid. Privately he *has* discussed the issue. He has positively asserted, for example, that (despite his diary entry) he had absolutely no knowledge of the presence of White Russians among the returned Cossacks, though conceding that some might have been included in error. Then, again, he has indicated approval of Christopher Booker's mitigation of his role; but as Mr Booker concedes that Macmillan *did* know and approve of the dispatch of the White Russians,[30] we seem to be faced by a discrepancy as hard to explain as the rest.

Though Harold Macmillan had reasons for not wishing to discuss the forced repatriations with me, he *did* recently discuss them freely with Sir Nigel Fisher, author of a recent laudatory biography.[31] In this more appropriate setting, Mr Macmillan is quoted as saying that in my book *Stalin's Secret War*,

> "Tolstoy omitted to mention, or perhaps did not know, that a high-level agreement had been reached between the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Government, to which Alexander and Macmillan were obliged to conform." (This refers to the forced repatriation of the Cossacks)

One can almost sense the languid charm, the dismissive flutter of the hand. What was not mentioned in this delightful interview was the fact that Mr Macmillan had been specifically described as *infringing* the agreement mentioned, and of doing so by deceiving his government. It might have appeared a little odd, too, that the author of a book entitled *Victims of Yalta* should not have known of the existence of the Yalta Agreement. I put these points to Sir Nigel Fisher, who apologised handsomely and agreed that he should have checked the Macmillan statement. What is relevant to the present enquiry is that Mr Macmillan presumably has no better justification of his actions than this.

HAROLD MACMILLAN'S MOTIVES for arranging the surrender of more than 70,000 men, women and children to certain death, torture, and imprisonment can only be guessed at. Perhaps he thought

[28] It was probably Dr Miha Krek, former Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister, who revealed to Alexander that his orders were being disobeyed. Krek received the news on 1 June, and wrote to the FO and AFHQ to protest on 7 June. But very likely he had already passed information across through other channels. In his reply to Dr Krek, Alexander was obliged to admit that the "handover was carried out on the instructions of this Headquarters" (FO.371/48825, 62, 76, etc.). For the suppressed parallel order of 4 June reprieving the Cossacks, see my *Victims of Yalta* (London, 1977), pp. 263–64.

[29] *Foreign Relations . . . 1945*, V, p. 1250.

[30] Christopher Booker, "The Cossacks' Betrayal", *Spectator* (29 August 1981), pp. 7–8.

[31] Nigel Fisher, *Harold Macmillan* (London, 1982), pp. 119, 377.

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the gesture would ingratiate Stalin and Tito, both ever hungry for blood. By what logic he came to the belief that such an action furthered his country's interests will probably never be known.

A remarkable factor is the secrecy surrounding the operations, secrecy so effective that more than a generation had to pass before the truth began to emerge about the fate of the Cossacks and Yugoslavs. Clearly Mr Macmillan had to conceal what he was doing from Field-Marshal Alexander and Winston Churchill. There was another crucial aspect which certainly cannot have escaped him.

As early in the War as October 1942, the Foreign Secretary (Anthony Eden) had stated in the House of Commons that proposals for the establishment of a United Nations Commission for the investigation of War Crimes had been submitted to all Allied Governments. As the tide of war turned against the enemy, preparations to meet this contingency increased. At the Teheran Conference in 1943 Churchill, Roosevelt, and Stalin issued a declaration stating that Germans responsible for War Crimes would be tried and punished at the end of the War, a resolution which was publicly reaffirmed at Yalta in February 1945. On 12 April 1945, a bare month before Mr Macmillan provided General Keightley with his authority to hand over the Cossacks and Yugoslavs, the British War Cabinet discussed the proposed trials in some detail.[32] Minutes of this and related discussions were read by Mr Macmillan, who was of course directly concerned with consideration of the policy.

Had defence counsel at the War Crimes Trials at Nuremberg and elsewhere been in possession of the facts of what happened in Eastern Austria and North Italy within a week of the German surrender, the entire process of trying war criminals might have ground to a halt. For was it not an indictable war crime knowingly to despatch tens of thousands of defenceless men, women, and children to execution squads and death-camps?

There may be those who regard the whole episode as an unpleasant piece of long-dead history, now better forgotten. Regrettably this is not so. Thousands of grieving relatives of the victims survive, and the killing still goes on. Only last year, on 3 November 1982, a Yugoslav political court sentenced to death Stevan Mojič, a 62-year-old former subaltern of the Serbian Volunteer Corps. Mojič was one of those handed over by the British to Tito as a result of Harold Macmillan's decision in May 1945. Then only 24 years old, he escaped from the worst of all the massacres, at Kočevje, by jumping from the train. He concealed himself for eleven years. Nearly 40 years later, the Yugoslav Government shows that it at least has not forgotten the secret transaction.[33] Could Mr Macmillan or Lord Aldington (Toby Low) be persuaded to employ their considerable influence and prestige on behalf of this unhappy man?

[32] Sir Llewellyn Woodward, *British Foreign Policy in the Second World War* (London, 1962), pp. 199, 573–74.

[33] Cf. the detailed press release and appeal for Mr Mojič's reprieve issued on 22 December 1982 from the Serbian Orthodox Church of St Lazar in Birmingham.

The Victorian Singing

Yes, we had quite a large,
quite a large collation,
we discussed, yes, we discussed
several pork chops.
Some dozens of claret
were opened, were opened;
a pipe of port was in question,
in question.
Nobody was sober, was sober, was sober.
Lifted skirts, naked thighs, high boots.

All discussed, all discussed
in the lewdness of Latin!

But O for the oysters, oysters, oysters!

Gavin Ewart

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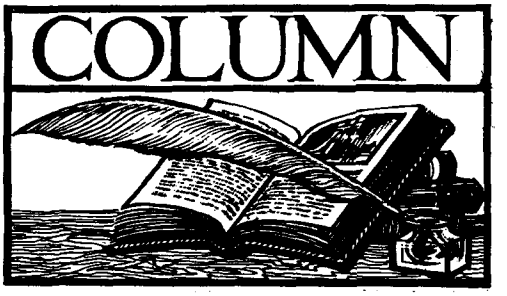

A FEW WEEKS AGO, British television began running a new schlock-and-dagger series from the States: *Knight Rider*. Its central character is human; but the real hero is his car. Veterans of past extravaganzas will recall countless chases, side-swipes, collisions, pile-ups, plunges down cliffs, explosions, and other motorised mayhem. In one recent exploitation movie, a revenge story set in a punk-filled high school, a harassed teacher systematically wrecks the chief punk's roadster—*The Blackboard Jungle* meets *Death Wish*. Those who pay to see this (and the subsequent rapes and murders) are presumably teen- and twenty-agers who get hell for scraping the paintwork on the family saloon. Their parents no doubt enjoyed fairground booths where they shied wooden balls at crockery. But *Knight Rider* celebrates more than America's love-hate affair with the automobile. Like numerous stunt-man pictures, it exults in technical prowess: the car does everything but fly—a refinement reserved for James Bond films. One almost expects it to talk. Almost? What am I saying? Talk it does. And when it talks, the voice is no computerised monotone, but a rueful, complaining, resigned, even wisecracking virtuoso. This isn't the car as mistress, or even as wife: it's the car as brilliant put-upon pal. Give or take a grouch or two, *Knight Rider* is *Starsky and Hatchback*, or *Butch Cassidy and the Sunroof Coupé*.

We've come a long way since Sinclair Lewis. To George F. Babbitt, you remember, "his motor-car was poetry and tragedy, love and heroism. . . ." Even parking it was "a virile adventure"; and driving in those days, especially in Europe, went by the name of "motoring." No connection with the current Cockney locution "me mo'or", but an aristocratic sport involving goggles, caps, scarves, leather coats, and spare cans of fuel on the running-board. Popular romances of the period featured Daimlers and Bentleys with wire wheels, heroines in cloche hats, and rugged, pipe-smoking ex-officers pushing the old bus along at breakneck speeds well in excess of 40 m.p.h. The biggest hazard, apart from villains with hideous names, was a puncture or a boiling radiator. But clubland heroes could cope with that sort of thing. They might not be senior wranglers, but they were good with their hands; they knew about cars as they knew about horses. A gentleman could tackle a magneto.

As late as the 1930s, the car was still a horseless carriage. In Britain, the Highway Code prescribed not only elaborate hand signals ("I am going to slow down or stop") but also more arcane flourishes of a driver's whip. Many cars still had running-boards, though without a fuel can; headlamps and side-lights were free-standing, like carriage lamps; and the shape of the vehicle, tall and roomy as a London taxi-cab, recalled the stage-coach. Even the door-handles looked the part. My parents' earliest car, I remember, abounded in walnut and leather and built-in picnic tables: it was like being driven in a vanity-case. And vanity there was, in those minority pleasures. "You'd never see sights like this riding in a motor-car" ran the caption of one truculent period cartoon. It depicted Alpine scenery with, in the foreground, two oafish paupers in shorts and climbing boots.

"MOTORING" hasn't quite died out. Touring in France, say, from one Michelin restaurant-with-rooms to another, on minor roads, with cheese and olives at lunch-time, can revive Edwardian enjoyment. So can an outmoded automobile. For some years, I drove an ancient Bentley. "*Une ruine*", said a candid friend, "*mais magnifique!*" Sunk in the deep upholstery, with a 4.7-litre engine and yards of grey metal stretching fore and aft, I felt like the commander of a comfortable tank. At 90 m.p.h., the loudest sound was the drain on my overdraft. Eventually, I sold the car at a profit: I couldn't live up to its lordly image, or outface the resentment of passers-by. In a democratic age and an oil crisis, the old grey cruiser seemed an affront.

Earlier, I'd had a convertible—which had the opposite effect. "Nice work if you can get it" shouted a lorry-driver as I flashed by with the hood down and a girl beside me: he was envious, but not upset. The reason, I'm sure, was our not being shut in. Open to the world, the dust, and the fumes—even, when feeling robust, to rain and snowflakes—the car's occupants were human, not snooty stereotypes half-hidden in an expensive box. With the lid off, this too was "motoring": it had a dash of the apéritif ads.

Convertibles were long believed to be unsafe. I suspect that this was mistaken—based on the speed of sports cars, or the fact that they're driven by the young. Drivers, not their vehicles, cause the majority of accidents; and one factor in their misdeeds is their isolation in a private world. Take ordinary men or women, and encounter them as pedestrians: they'll behave reasonably well. They'll meet your gaze as your paths cross; if need be, they'll side-step neatly. If you both side-step in the same direction, you'll probably smile: one stranger, on the streets of New York, smartly asked me "Shall we dance? . . ." But give them umbrellas in a rainstorm, and they change. Some charge along regard-

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less, twirling their spokes into others. Some brandish their brollies like shields. The worst hold them low on their heads for maximum protection, then can see nothing but legs and feet. When two such wimps coincide, there's a head-on crash.

CARS, in this respect, are like umbrellas. Their drivers can see, of course, except in rain through a greasy windshield; but their isolation is real. Watch the next line of cars you meet at a stop light: in several of them, the occupants may be jigging about, beating time to some unknown tune on the radio or cassette-player. Now and then, a mouth may crack open for a snatch of unheard song. Score double if it's a popular programme and you spot two drivers tapping the beat in unison. If one of them winds down his window and tosses an empty cigarette packet into the road, his universal trash can, score triple: he's really deep in his private world. Score ten bonus points by handing back his garbage, saying politely "I think you dropped this."

I've seen it done, with blood-boiling effect. But the inner life of many drivers must be turbulent already. In the anonymity of a metal carapace, they display aggression they'd be ashamed to show their analysts. The real truth drugs come from Longbridge and Detroit. If you doubt it, stop off at a British motorway café. You could hardly be further from the gracious, spacious days of "motoring." Fast food—piped rock music—overpriced candy and souvenirs: these are only the trimmings. The overriding impact is of nervous tension, too-loud voices, stiff-legged swagger, sweat-shirted R&R for battle-weary drivers about to return to dual-carriageway combat in their lonely, vulnerable wagons. And what does their recreation include? One-arm bandits with chromium-plated Colts offering a Shoot-out at OK Corral.

NO WONDER long-distance drives are so unnerving. If aircraft buzzed each other as closely as trucks and automobiles on the highway, there'd be public inquiries galore. Instead, we accept constant near-misses at a distance appropriate to horse-drawn traffic; and even where we've built superhighways we've saved money and cost lives by leaving the lanes side by side. How much time, money, and hassle would it cost to make all roads, including both sides of motorways, one-way streets? How many deaths and injuries would be saved by such a network? The questions are hypothetical. If we really cared, we'd have done it long ago.

As it is, we strap ourselves in, switch on the soothing music, and live dangerously, feet deft on the pedals, fingers feathering the wheel, eyes darting from road to mirror to speedometer, alert for brake lights ahead or the rush of headlamps behind us, wary of fog or a slippery surface, looking for gaps to overtake or switch lanes for someone faster, wondering if a police car's manning a speed trap, watching the gauges to plan the next fuel stop, jerking ourselves awake as monotony lulls us, alarmed by a lorry's loose top-heavy load, feeling the wind rock and swerve us, puzzling out emergency signals, slowing down for a contraflow system, hearing the flap-flap-flap of sound bounce off the central reservation, driving on and on with no real thoughts except these continual, immediate, transitory, vital, pettifogging life-or-death worries and decisions, strung-up and tense for hours. I sound like a commercial for train travel. I know that some constant drivers enjoy exerting their skill: a few even claim to find it relaxing. For myself, I like "motoring." But that's become all too rare.

NOT THAT YOU'D THINK SO, to read the advertisements for cars. At about the time that *Knight Rider* began its game with British drivers' neuroses, British Leyland announced a new model, the *Maestro*, which sounded like a cut-price version of the Knight's miraculous steed—including a voice synthesiser to tell the time, remind one about lights and seatbelts, say when fuel's getting low, and so on. "One test drive and you'll believe in miracles" we were told. Space, fuel consumption, and modern technology were the major selling points; but the copywriters still seemed to be hooked on "motoring" as a sport. "Beauty of line", "sheer performance", nay, "truly adrenalin-pumping performance" . . . "a top speed of 111 mph" . . . "all the refinements of today's sports car, including sporty five-speed box, alloy wheels, sports seats. . . ." It sounded just the thing for Bulldog Drummond or Dornford Yates's Jonah: but where do *they* ride tonight?

In fact, like almost all new cars, the talkative *Maestro* is still just a box—a chatterbox—on wheels. Sophisticated, comfortable, well-designed, economical—all that and more, without a doubt. I'll not refuse if British Leyland gives me one in exchange for this free plug. But it's yet another boring buggy, for people sitting in two rows facing the same way with the engine in front of them, a sliding roof above, and a hatchback for luggage behind. Not a word about lead-free fuel, fume suppressors, or battery-powered electric locomotion for use in towns. Not a word, either, about the other features of the secret dream automobile I've cherished for many frustrated years. Here and there in the technical press, or in failed commercial ventures, I've come across one or another of the dream car's attributes; but like the one-way-street road network it remains so far a gleam in a jaundiced eye.

FIRST OF ALL, the car would be unrustable, made of aluminium or stainless steel. It would need no

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paintwork save as an optional extra. Undersealing could be forgotten; and with lead banned from fuel and pollution suppressed there'd be far less gunge to pick up from the air.

Secondly, like a model once made in Germany, the car would be amphibious, able to double as a slow-speed motor-boat. Some enthusiasts might use it to chug about inland or inshore waters; sailors would find it helpful for launching, towing, and tendering—to say nothing of its potential in floods.

Constructionally, the dream car would rely on a traditional chassis like the old Triumph Herald, but would contain a safety "box" like the present-day Volvo 240 range. Within the limits thus imposed, it would be a convertible; but the structural bars would support a roof rack if required.

Internal arrangements would be flexible. The driver would have to face forwards, at least until computerised traffic control makes drivers unnecessary; but the passengers would be able to sit in a variety of positions around a small, folding central table, in anchored, adjustable, swivellable seats.

There would be eight wheels: four normal wheels for travelling, and four small wheels on hydraulic jacks for sideways parking.

On estate models, the rear portion of the car would be telescopic, extensible and retractable, to provide additional baggage and/or sleeping accommodation, supported if necessary on two further jockey wheels.

For town driving, in addition to the lead-free petrol engine with its fume suppressant system, the car would be equipped with electric power from rechargeable batteries. These could be discarded for amphibious trips.

Beyond these general specifications, the dream car would offer optional extras. A radio telephone would be standard equipment; but those who wished could add a portable personal bleeper enabling them to be reached when away from the car. Where local laws permitted, the car could carry a loud-hailer. Optional anti-theft devices would include a siren, indelible dye pods, and non-lethal electric shocks. For camping purposes, lockable ventilators could be installed. In warm climates, the car could be fitted with a solar panel, air-conditioning, and a small refrigerator. Miniature colour television for the passengers would be standard, with a larger set as an optional alternative; aerials for this and the quadrophonic radio would be incorporated in the framework of the car.

Most important of all, the dream car would be built to last at least twenty years and/or 500,000 miles; and spare parts would be guaranteed for a century. Once bought, like a house, it would be a permanent possession. Its value would no doubt appreciate with time.

NO ONE, CLEARLY, is ever going to build so eccentric a vehicle—any more than a razor firm will ever make a painless male depilatory or an unbluntable blade. Too many jobs and too much investment are at stake in manufacturing transient boxes on wheels which pollute our cities and rot our children's brains. But just as most of the elements in the dream car have been made or invented, or lie very nearly within our technical grasp, so an astute manufacturer might find it worth his while to buck the trend of tradition in one respect or another. Most urgent, perhaps, is eliminating lead and other pollutants. That need not be costly—though it will need help from the oil companies. As for cost, many might think it a wise investment to buy a car that didn't corrode or rattle to pieces. Other attractions may be more debatable; but now that British Leyland has at least vocally echoed *Knight Rider*, it's surely time for manufacturers everywhere to join in the Misprint Chorus of *Begone Dull Cars*.

M

The Story of Kaspar Hauser

What he felt, dreamt, saw, thought he saw:
wind in ripe grain, wind through a copse
howling in a tunnel without walls or roof.
Silent rage. Peace beyond understanding.
The empty brain he left his inquisitors
refused to echo. Neither peace nor rage nor peace.
Buds on a dead tree? Song in a warped flute?
Not by sawing the wood, not by cursing the breath.

Robin Fulton

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Ibn Taymiyya: Father of the Islamic Revolution

Medieval Theology & Modern Politics

By EMMANUEL SIVAN

WHAT has been called "the hottest literary property" in the Arab world today (particularly in Egypt) is the work of a 14th-century theologian, Ibn Taymiyya. Six months before President Sadat's assassination, his ruling Party's weekly, *Mayo*, singled out Ibn Taymiyya (together with his major contemporary disciple) as the most pervasive and deleterious influence upon Egyptian youth. From him they learned that "violence and seizure of power are justified by Islamic law and tradition"—and that fellow Muslims, be they Sunnis (orthodox, i.e., not Shiite heretics) could become the target of a "holy war in the cause of Allah." No wonder, *Mayo* concluded, the proliferating Muslim Associations at the universities, where Ibn Taymiyya's views prevail, have been spawning various terrorist groups.

None of these groups attained the size (c. one thousand) and temerity of the *Jihad* Organisation, four of whose members assassinated Sadat. They failed in their attempt to wipe out the entire political or military leadership present on the reviewing stand during the 6 October parade, and thus unleash "the Islamic Revolution." The blueprint of that revolution and its major ideological statement are to be found in a book entitled *The Absent Precept*, printed in a clandestine edition of five hundred copies. That its author, a 27-year-old engineer, Abd al-Salam Faraj, the moving spirit of the group, was the only one sentenced to death (and executed), except of course for the four armed assassins, is evidence enough of how seriously the régime takes the ideology of its enemies. The text of the verdict, appropriately enough, devotes ample space to discussing—and refuting—Faraj's ideas.

The Absent Precept (the precept in question being the *Jihad*, for whose revival the book calls) draws heavily upon the writings of Ibn Taymiyya as well as of a number of his disciples.[1] It does so in the manner of the medieval disputation: quoting Ibn Taymiyya at length in order to prove a point, sometimes indulging in a detailed exegesis of his arguments in order to show how they apply today, 653 years after his death. The book was read, commented and meditated upon by almost all the conspirators already brought to trial as well as by many other members of the *Jihad* Organisation. At least three of Sadat's four assassins also did extensive reading on their own in the works of the Ibn Taymiyya school.[2]

The Egyptian authorities seem to be baffled and troubled by this upsurge in the popularity of Ibn Taymiyya. For though rigorously puritanical, this thinker certainly falls within the limits of Islamic orthodoxy and is considered by common consent to be the greatest theologian of his century. He has since exercised a minor but respectable influence (notably on the mid-18th-century Wahhabite movement, which gave birth to Saudi Arabia).

It is this very respectability which makes a "revolutionary version" of Ibn Taymiyya so effective in Sunni Islam, far more than the Khomeini gospel with its distinct Shiite flavour. Still, Ibn Taymiyya (and his medieval commentators) cannot be out-

[1] Excerpts were published in *al-Ahram* (Cairo) 14 December 1981; *al-Liwa al-Islami* (Cairo), 25 February, 4, 11, and 18 March 1982 (with commentary by four official theologians); and in the considerations of the verdict on judgment of Sadat's assassins, *al-Ahram*, 25 March 1982.

[2] *Mayo* 2 November 1981; *al-Ahram* 20 November 1981; *al-Musawwar* 27 November 1981. This is all the more remarkable if we take into consideration that most members of the *Jihad* Organisation had a substantial modern education. Of the 286 members hitherto brought to trial for whom such information is available, at least 60% are modern-educated (123 university students, 10 high-school students, 37 in the liberal professions). If one adds the 50 high-school students not brought to trial because they were under eighteen, the share of the modern-educated is even higher. Of the university students, 68 (or 55%) were in Science and Engineering faculties and in medical schoools. Only five studied theology (*al-Ahram*, 9 May 1982).

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lawed, though the editors of *Mayo* have since suggested that it was a mistake to put him in wide circulation; limited editions for scholars could have circumscribed the danger. Some of his modern disciples (e.g. Sayyid Qutb) are banned; some (such as Maulana Maudoodi) are not—a good measure of the ideological confusion in high places. The new mass-circulation weekly put out by the Mubarak régime to combat extremism, *al-Liwa al-Islami*, devoted much space in four recent issues to an in-depth discussion by leading theologians of the 14th-century Ibn Taymiyya and the 20th-century *Absent Precept*. The brunt of the argument was that the executed Faraj had deliberately and tragically distorted the message of his alleged mentor. Will this learned disquisition have the desired impact?

WHY IS IT that the modern twist given to Ibn Taymiyya has proven to be so effective among young Muslims? Why him and not some other medieval theologian? How faithful to the letter—or to the spirit—of his thought are Faraj and his ilk? The best way to answer these questions may be by tracing the history of some of Ibn Taymiyya's ideas, as they passed from their medieval context into the contemporary world.

HE LIVED his entire life (1263-1328) in the Mamluk sultanate of Egypt and Syria, and sat quite frequently on the defendants' bench in Mamluk courts for involvement in one religious dispute or another. In some cases he was acquitted, in others sent to prison, where he wrote a number of his treatises. He was ultimately to die in the jail of the Damascus citadel, though not before enjoying a few periods of grace and influence under more sympathetic sultans. This mixture of impact and persecution foreshadowed the ambiguity which he elicits today in the religious and the political establishment.

A firebrand he surely was, but hardly a revolutionary. In a manner which one can find among other *Ulama* (men of religion) but with unsurpassed moral courage, intensity, and intellectual vigour, he clamoured for a return to the pristine purity of the first four decades of Islam (622-661). His whole endeavour was designed to cleanse Islam of the dross accumulated during centuries of decline: in theology (towards a more literal—his opponents said, anthropomorphic—perception of the deity as against pantheistic mystics); in matters of ritual (against pilgrimages to tombs and the cult of Jerusalem); as well as in legal affairs (stricter application of the *Shari'a*, the Islamic law). This brought him into collision above all with the religious establishment—rationalistic theologians, lax judges, *sufis*, and dervishes—and only indirectly with the powers-that-be. The latter were, on the whole, indifferent to the theological and ritualistic controversies he aroused. They backed the religious dignitaries, either because they thought they owed it to these faithful servants or out of the sheer conservatism of a military ruling caste bred upon the simple notions of the Islam of Central Asia (where the Mamluks came from). Only in legal affairs could they feel directly involved—as when illegal taxes and relative leniency towards non-Muslims were denounced and when the habits of the ruling class (in sexual affairs, wine-drinking) could be construed to be the real object of Ibn Taymiyya's vituperations.

Nevertheless, the zealous theologian did enjoy at times the protection of a few sultans and emirs (local governors); and not even hostile sultans and emirs accused him of sedition. Nor was there any reason for them to do so. Never did Ibn Taymiyya challenge the legitimacy of any particular sultan, or *a fortiori* that of the Mamluk régime. He was thus indicted as a "trouble-maker", a "slanderer" or "deviant" from theological norms, but never as the harbinger of insurgency.

Small wonder that for more than six centuries Ibn Taymiyya has been the model for revivalists, for fundamentalist reformers, and other apostles of moral rearmament. But how did it come about that he was dubbed the spiritual father of the Islamic Revolution, Sunni-style? Is it a mere case of theological misunderstanding or political distortion, or rather of "creative interpretation?"

The Mongol Problem

IT IS SIGNIFICANT that these, the better-known pages of his biography and writings, are not what attracted the attention of his modern disciples. It was rather his teachings on the question of the Mongols.

The Mongols of Ibn Taymiyya's adulthood were no longer the heathens who conquered all the lands of Islam east of Syria and put an end to the Baghdad Caliphate (1258). By the late 13th century, the Mongols had embraced Sunni Islam even as their expansionist drive continued. The *Ulama* of Syria and Egypt were faced with an excruciating dilemma: Was war against the Mongols still a *Jihad* or had it become a mere clash between two Sunni states? If the latter, it created a deplorable conflict but not one that called for recourse to Holy War (as would have been the case had the Mongols become Shiites). No doubt it was in the interests of the Mamluk rulers to see the war continue to be called a *Jihad* in order to fire the zeal of their soldiers, recruit volunteers, justify new taxes and expropriations required to finance the war effort, and to

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deter the citizenry from any collaboration with the invaders.

Paradoxically enough it was from the pen of an intellectual not known for his docility that the most effective answer was to come. Ibn Taymiyya had been preoccupied by the Mongol menace since childhood. At the age of six he had to flee to Damascus with his family when his native city in northeastern Syria was overrun by the Mongol hordes. This "refugee syndrome" may account for his anti-Mongol zeal and his uncharacteristic readiness to issue a legal opinion so much in line with what the Mamluk authorities were looking for. Yet, heaping irony upon paradox, he was to do that in a manner which could one day be turned against the authorities. In his *fatwa* (response to a legal query) on the Mongols, he admitted that they did profess the Islamic credo ("There is no other god than Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger"); they did perform the five daily prayers and observe the fast of Ramadan. But was this enough to make them true Muslims?

According to the letter of law, of the *Shari'a*, the answer was no doubt positive. The mere performance of the double formula of faith (*Shahadatayn*) would have sufficed. But here Ibn Taymiyya introduced a new criterion. A professed Sunni Muslim ceases to be one when he fails to keep (or in the case of a Muslim ruler, apply) the *Shari'a*, when he breaks major injunctions concerning life and limb, property, *Jihad* and the status of non-Muslims, the sexual code of behaviour, alcoholic prohibition, gambling, etc. The list of injunctions he draws is quite long; and it is not altogether clear how many non-applied injunctions bring the ruler (or the individual believer) to the point of no return. When does he become an apostate to be combated? This created some degree of obfuscation—which continues to this very day—as to the full import of this *fatwa*.[3]

In the case of the Mongols—and it was these "deviants" who interested Ibn Taymiyya in the first place—things were crystal clear. His disciple Ibn Kathir (1300–1372/3) best expounded the viewpoint in his own Koranic commentary on the verses "Whoso judgeth not according to what God hath revealed, they are the transgressors .... Do they therefore seek after the *Jahiliyya* (pre-Islamic times)?" (V, 44, 48). The exegesis runs as follows:

> "[These verses] refer to people who abide by regulations and laws set by men, to fit their own misguided desires and whims, rather than adhering to the *Shari'a* bestowed upon us by Allah. This was the case with the inhabitants [of Arabia] during the *Jahiliyya* ... and (today) with the Mongols who follow the *Yasa* code set down by Genghis Khan, which is a conglomeration of laws, some taken from Jewish, Christian, Muslim and other legal traditions and many others decided upon by the whim of the Mongol rulers: the whole amalgam being given priority over the laws of Allah laid down in the Koran and the Sunna [oral tradition]. Those who follow such (man-made) laws are infidels and should be combated till they comply with the laws of God."

THUS THE *Yasa* laws of Genghis Khan, brought by his hordes from Central Asia, invalidated the Islam of the Mongols, making it into something worse than heresy (such as the Shi'a). Their Islam becomes the polytheism of the *Jahiliyya*—an old, emotion-laden vituperative term which (as we shall see) will have an interesting modern career. That Ibn Taymiyya was not only ruling on the special case and was well aware of its general doctrinal significance is clearly elucidated in his treatise on *Public Policy in Islamic Jurisprudence*:

> "It has been established from the Book, from the Sunna and from the general unanimity of the [Muslim] nation that he who forsakes the Law of Islam should be fought, though he may have once pronounced the two formulas of Faith (in Islam).—There may be a difference of opinion regarding rebellious groups which neglect a voluntary, but established, piece of worship ... but there is no uncertainty regarding the duties and prohibitions, which are both explicit and general. He who neglects them should be fought until he agrees to abide (by these duties and prohibitions): to perform the five assigned prayers per day, to pay the *zakat* [alms], to fast during the month of Ramadan, and to undertake pilgrimage to the Ka'ba [at Mecca]. Furthermore they should avoid all forbidden acts, like marriage with sisters, the eating of impure foods (such as pork, cattle that has died or was unlawfully slaughtered, etc.), and the attack on the lives and wealth of the Muslims. Any such trespasser of the Law should be fought, provided that he had a knowledge of the mission of the Prophet, Peace be Upon Him. This knowledge makes him responsible for obeying the orders, the prohibitions and the permits. If he disobeys these he should then be fought."
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> English tr., Beirut, 1966, p.145.

The treatise in question belongs to a rare Islamic literary genre—political theory. Muslim (or to be more precise, Sunni) thinkers tended to consider this domain the preserve of the authorities. Thus, even Muslim legal treatises rarely discuss constitutional law. (Those few who ventured into this awesome realm usually wrote essays justifying the status quo.) By the time they began to do so, in the mid-11th century, the status quo usually meant Turkish, i.e., alien military rule, rather more arbitrary than the caliphate of early Islam.

[3] Ibn Taymiyya, *Collection of Responsa* [in Arabic], Cairo 1909, vol. 4, pp. 280–281, 198.

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IBN TAYMIYYA was one of the few exceptions to this rule—a thinker who grappled with the realities of power. Moreover, the passage quoted above is the nearest any pre-modern theorist in Sunni Islam ever came to expounding a theory of the right of resistance to illegitimate power (*Widerstandsrecht*). The "right of revolt" goes without saying for the Shiites, a perenially persecuted minority, devoted as they were to the House of Ali (the fourth caliph, who was ousted from power in 661). But in the dominant, Sunni brand of Islam, the *Ulama* were above all motivated by fear of *fitna* (civil strife), the recurrence of the ferocious civil war of the type which wracked the Islamic community in the mid-7th century. Hence their acceptance of any Sunni authority as long as it did not renege on the faith. This does not mean that *Ulama* failed to admonish rulers (albeit not very courageously) on specific deviations; but criticism stopped short of de-legitimation. A bad Sunni ruler was better than anarchy.

Ibn Taymiyya's great teacher and the founder of the legal school to which he belonged (the Hanbalites) was Ibn Hanbal (d. 855), and this is what this rigorous jurist had to say about resistance:

> "You should obey the government and not rebel against it. If the ruler orders something which implies sin against God (*ma'siya*) you should neither obey nor rebel. Do not support the *fitna* (strife) neither by your hand nor by your tongue."

The chief Qadi (judge) of Harun al-Rashid's 9th-century caliphate, and one of the most eminent jurists, Abū Yūsuf, writes on the same topic in a book (*Kitab al-Kharaj*) where he compares the responsibility of the Caliph before God to that of the shepherd to the owner of the flock. Like other jurists before him Abū Yūsuf perceives a wicked ruler as God's punishment to his community.

> "Rulers are a scourge through whom God punishes those He decides to punish. So do not meet God's scourge with hot temper and anger but with humility and submission."

An earlier version of the same attitude is that of the Qadi Amir ibn Shurhabil al-Sha'bi al-Kufi (d. 721) writing under the Omayyads:

> "Love the family of the Prophet without being Shiite . . . and believe that what is good derives from God and what is evil is of your own making . . . and obey the Caliph even if he is a black slave."

It is from this well-trodden path of pragmatic compromise that Ibn Taymiyya strays. For him, a Sunni ruler becomes illegitimate if he does not apply a substantial part of the *Shari'a*. The illegitimacy is defined in *Ulama* terms: the ruler who neglects or transgresses Islamic law is virtually an infidel (*kafir*), hence the object of *Jihad*. How substantial a part of the *Shari'a* must be transgressed in order for the ruler to become a *kafir* was (as we have seen) not specified. Perhaps this was because, in the case of the Mongols, the introduction of their *Yasa* rules signified such a massive abdication of the *Shari'a* as to render this question superfluous.

BUT THE QUESTION is of some significance with regard to the Mamluks. Why didn't Ibn Taymiyya and his followers declare any of the Sultans illegitimate in view of their transgressions in the realm of taxes, status of non-Muslims, alcohol, etc? Fear of these brutal rulers is not an altogether adequate explanation when speaking of a man like Ibn Taymiyya, who was ready to go to jail even for the abstractions of theological disputes. It seems that for all his criticism of their actual behaviour he still thought the Mamluks had not crossed the fateful threshold. One of his present-day followers explains:

> "The *Ulama* of those times could not imagine their rulers deviating from the way of life set by Allah in the systematic and comprehensive manner we witness today. Nor was it conceivable for them that rulers would throw the *Shari'a* away altogether, conspire against Islam, maltreat Muslims and form alliances with the Enemies of God, as happens quite often today."[5]

Yet, outweighing everything else was the external, foreign-policy consideration. The Abode of Islam was under heavy and unrelenting attack by Mongols and latter-day Crusaders. The Mamluk battalions, dedicated warriors of *Jihad*, were the only effective dam stemming that tide, from the battle of 'Ayn Jalut (1260) onwards. This partly exonerated them. Their sins could be criticised but had to be kept in a proper perspective. Their contribution to the defence of Islam could not be forgotten. It is significant that Ibn Taymiyya took an active part, as a sort of medieval *politruk*, in many Mamluk campaigns against the Mongols (as well as against the Armenian kingdom of Asia Minor, an ally of the Crusaders.) His follower, Ibn Kathir, was the author of a celebrated treatise extolling the merits of the Holy War, written in the wake of the massive raids of the Cypriot Crusader navy against Alexandria and Syrian Tripoli.

There were thus clear limits as to what the Ibn Taymiyya school committed itself to do in the realm of politics. But a new seed had been sown.

The Modern "Jahiliyya"

DURING the following six centuries, this school—with its puritanical rigour, emphasis

[5] 'A. al-Nafisi, *When Islam Will Reign Supreme* [in Arabic], London, 1981, p. 144.

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on literal exegesis, and its animosity towards "accretions, innovations and dross"—did serve from time to time as the moving spirit of fundamentalist movements in Islam (notably the Wahhabites of Arabia). All of these movements operated, however, prior to the onset of modernity in the 19th and 20th centuries. Ibn Taymiyya was still being used in order to interpret medieval-type phenomena and deviations with the same old bounds set upon the right of revolt, all the more so as the Abode of Islam was coming under devastating military attack by Western colonialist powers.

The modern rediscovery of Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Kathir—as well as Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziya, and some lesser lights—was to take place in 20th-century Egypt and Muslim India. This was not due to sheer accident, for these lands were the first to come under the impact of the West. Western influence thus had time to penetrate the local culture. Many were alarmed by what they considered to be the effective undermining of Islam from within and despaired of coming to terms with that alien culture without forfeiting their ancient identity—and they found in the Ibn Taymiyya doctrine a kind of inspired solution. The analogy of the Mongols and the concept of pre-Islamic *Jahiliyya* would be reinterpreted to suit the new state of affairs.

Commenting on the Koranic verse quoted above (V, 44: "Whoso judgeth not etc.") Rashid Rida, a Syrian thinker living in Egypt (1866–1935), wrote in his *al-Manar Exegesis* that it applies

> "to those Muslim (rulers) who introduce novel laws today and forsake the *Shari'a* enjoined upon them by God .... They thus abolish supposedly 'distasteful' penalties such as cutting off the hands of thieves or stoning adulterers and prostitutes. They replace them by man-made laws and penalties. He who does that has undeniably become an infidel."

The reference to European laws introduced in Egypt is obvious, and further on the author mentions explicitly the imposition of British laws in India. Coming to the *"Jahiliyya* verse" (V, 48), he applies it to the "geographical Muslims of our age", i.e., those ostensible Muslims who belong to the faith by virtue of living in a Muslim land and keeping certain rituals, yet who "set laws of their own making and free themselves from the discipline of the laws of Allah."

Rashid Rida adheres to the letter of the Koranic verse, and he deals merely with the introduction of foreign laws (even though the modern Western challenge was operating on a much wider front). Moreover, he stops short of declaring *Jihad* against the Westernised Muslims and especially against Westernising rulers. Yet the Ibn Taymiyya renaissance had begun—namely, the application of his doctrine to the new challenges facing the Islamic lands—this time, above all, from within. A challenge had arisen which was somewhat analogous to that of Greek philosophy and the Mongol *Yasa* laws Ibn Taymiyya combated 600 years ago; but it was broader and much more pervasive, impinging not only upon élites (as in the case of Greek philosophy) or new converts to Islam (as the Mongols and some Mamluk sultans). The expanding educational system and the mass media created a menace which hovered over the heads of all Muslims, especially city dwellers: creeping secularisation, be it deliberate or inadvertent.

CONSIDER HOW THIS DANGER was treated in 1953 in a Koranic commentary by an Egyptian thinker, Sayyid Qutb. Interpreting those same verses (V, 44, 48) in his book *In the Shadow of the Koran*, Qutb wrote:

> "*Jahiliyya* signifies the dominion of Man over Man, or rather the subservience to Man rather than to Allah. It denotes rejection of the divinity of God and the adulation of mortals. In this sense, *Jahiliyya* is not just a specific historical period but a state of affairs. Such a state of human affairs existed in the past, exists today and may exist in the future, taking the form of *Jahiliyya*, that mirror-image and sworn enemy of Islam. In any time and place human beings face that clear-cut choice: Either to observe the Law of Allah in its entirety, or to apply laws laid down by Man of one sort or another. In the latter case, they are in a state of *Jahiliyya*. Man is at the crossroads and that is the choice: Islam or *Jahiliyya*. Modern-style *Jahiliyya* in the industrialised societies of Europe and America is essentially similar to the old-time *Jahiliyya* in nomadic Arabia. For in both systems, Man is under the dominion of Man rather than of Allah."

Is this just a matter of laws and legislation? No, the *Jahiliyya* denotes, for Qutb, a polity legitimised by man-made criteria, such as the sovereignty of the people (rather than by divine grace), as well as a man-centred system of values and social mores (e.g., materialism, hedonism). Philosophical explanatory models—built on science alone with no place in their universe for God—are the apex, or perhaps nadir, of that *Jahiliyya*.

When one looks at Western societies, says Qutb in this and his other writings, one sees the future—and it does not work. This is the future awaiting Muslim societies: unbridled individualism, dissolution, depravity, leading to moral and social decline. A vast array of examples is marshalled to prove his point: from the writings of Western cultural critics (Arnold Toynbee, Alexis Carrel), to current affairs of the 1950s (such as the scandals in Britain over Christine Keeler and John Profumo, the Burgess & Maclean affair). As the world grows smaller, the

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danger of "culturally poisoning" the Islamic lands becomes more imminent. Hence the violence of tone and urgency of his message to his fellow Muslims who were tempted and even brainwashed by Western ideas, mostly through the agency of other Muslims, and on a scale and at a pace unprecedented in the history of Islam.

> "This is the most dangerous *Jahiliyya* which has ever menaced our faith [Qutb writes in his most popular book, *Signposts On The Road* (1965)]. For everything around us is *Jahiliyya*; perceptions and beliefs, manners and morals, culture, art and literature, laws and regulations, including a good part of what we consider Islamic culture."

In order to "throw off the yoke of *Jahiliyya*", society must undergo a radical change, beginning with its very moral foundations where "numerous man-made idols—from agnosticism to capitalism—hold sway." Domination (*Hakimiyya*) should be reverted to Allah alone, namely to Islam, that holistic system He conferred upon men. An all-out offensive, a *Jihad*, should be waged against modernity so that this moral rearmament could take place. The ultimate objective is to re-establish the Kingdom of God upon earth, "which does not signify that the *Hakimiyya* shall be in the hands of men of religion as in the medieval West." (Or, for that matter, among the Shiites—Khomeini would not have approved of Sayyid Qutb.) "No", says Qutb: "the goal is that the *Shari'a* will reign supreme." *Shari'a* not just in the narrow sense of a code of laws, but in a wider one of "the all-embracing way of life, laid down by Allah for the Muslims—from values to customs and social norms, which all in all shape human life." [6]

Does, then, Sayyid Qutb's rejection of modernity entail hostility towards technology and science? No, their instrumental worth is unquestionable, and he even admits the need for basic research, "provided it does not lead one to stray from the path of religion." Hence the need for maximum caution with regard to those fields (biology, astrophysics, etc.), which are liable to have a spill-over effect upon major religious tenets. Borrowing ideas from non-Muslims is illicit here, and one should double-check with regard to the religious authenticity of even Muslim scientists.

SAYYID QUTB'S brand of anti-modernism is, in a word, that of someone who has come to know modernity and then decided to turn his back on it. It is not that of an al-Azhar sheikh looking at it from the outside. Village-born, he went up to Cairo for his secondary studies and then graduated from the University of Cairo. He made his mark as a modernist literary critic in the late 1930s and in the '40s, and lived for a while in the USA on a cultural exchange mission (1949–1951). It is only upon his return to Egypt that his conversion to fundamentalism became apparent (although the process must have been in gestation for quite a while). Given this background, he was an ideal and effective interpreter of that 20th-century version of Ibn Taymiyya to the modernised sectors of the Arab world, especially to university students. This version itself was not his brainchild, although he was to lend it his erudition, ingenuity, and missionary zeal.

FREDERICK TURNER'S "Frontier Theory" (to account for innovation and renovation) would seem to be valid for Islam as well. Time and time again throughout Muslim history, movements of return to pristine values of that civilisation originated in the frontier lands (the Almohads of Saharan North Africa, the "moral rearmament" of the Seljukid Iranian heartland, etc.). This may well be the reason why the Ibn Taymiyya renaissance took part in another Muslim frontier country—India.

The twin ideas of *Jahiliyya/Hakimiyya* have been developed in India since 1939 by Maulana Maudoodi. He was the first Muslim thinker to arrive at this sweeping condemnation of modernity and its incompatibility with Islam, and to formulate a definition of the danger it constituted. The conclusion towards which Rashid Rida and others were slowly and hesitantly moving—that no compromise was possible between modernity and Islam, as was vaguely hoped till then—was stated by Maudoodi in even more forceful terms.

Maudoodi's major works—*Jihad in Islam, Islam and Jahiliyya, The Principles of Islamic Government*—began to be translated from Urdu into Arabic only in the 1950s; the major agent of transmission was his disciple Abu-l-Hasan Ali Nadwi, the future rector of the Islamic Academy of Lucknow. A famous scholar in his own right (notably on the Ibn Taymiyya school), Nadwi had always taken a deep interest in the Arab world which he considered the heart of Islam. The book he wrote in Arabic, *What Did the World Lose Due to the Decline of Islam?*, expounded the "modern *Jahiliyya*" doctrine and has been a resounding success ever since its publication in 1950. The mood of dejection and soul-searching following the First Palestine War created a receptive atmosphere. When the author visited the Middle East in 1951, he was given a triumphant welcome from statesmen (e.g. King Abdullah, who was well acquainted with the book) and major thinkers (e.g. Ahmad Amin, Lutfi al-Sayyid), as well as students and members of various Muslim associations. When he met

[6] *Signposts On The Road* [in Arabic], pp. 150–152, 30–33, 144–145, 165–166.

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Sayyid Qutb (who had already read his book) in Cairo, they found their ideas to be in close affinity.[7] Qutb's ideas seem to have developed along parallel lines, especially during his years in the USA (which he came to loathe). Yet there is no doubt that Ali Nadwi's influence helped crystallise the still amorphous ideas of Sayyid Qutb's *The Struggle Between Islam and Capitalism*, the fruit of his own American sojourn, into the more mature form of his Koranic exegesis where the concept of a "modern *Jahiliyya*" makes its first appearance in his work (and where Ali Nadwi and Maulana Maudoodi are also quoted at length).

Qutb, who had become active in the Muslim Brethren (and would soon head their Propaganda Section), was at that time a great believer in a long-term educational endeavour. In one of his conversations with Nadwi he remarked that a new Muslim community had to be patiently built by adding one reformed and repentant Muslim to another. He thus hoped "over a period of twenty-five years" to build a substantial force, a critical mass capable of changing the face of society.

In a few years' time Sayyid Qutb was to lose his patience, and the tone of his writing turned more shrill in calling for an immediate *Jihad*. His erstwhile mentor, Nadwi, was later to express deep misgivings about the precipitous decision of Qutb and his fellow Muslim Brethren to step into the arena of active politics. He found extenuating circumstances for this decision in the challenge of Nasserism, for here was a régime determined to bring about a radical transformation of Egyptian society based on Nationalism (an alternative focus of solidarity, vying with Islam), Materialism (economic growth as an overriding goal), and Marxism. Nasserist persecutions, Nadwi argued, catalysed the process.[8]

THIS SEEMS TO BE a plausible explanation for Qutb's radicalisation, and it followed the track set by the emerging new version of the old Ibn Taymiyya doctrine. Nasserism was the new Mongol invasion—an offensive operating from within the Islamic ranks, and hence more effective. Direct political struggle, not excluding violence, was the answer. Emphasis came to be shifted from the major *Jihad* (*al-Jihad al-Akbar*) against one's own sinful soul to the minor *Jihad* (*al-Jihad al-Asghar*) against those enemies of the faith, the false Muslims. Ibn Taymiyya could thus be utilised to substantiate the idea of civil war against Muslim (Sunni) rulers and against deviations from the faith in Muslim societies which had reached, for the first time since Muhammad, the dangerous threshold of *Jahiliyya*. Given this evaluation of the situation, the struggle against *external* enemies—a major consideration for Ibn Taymiyya—was relegated to a secondary place. Some of Sayyid Qutb's latter-day followers (e.g., the Islamic Liberation Party, which tried to instigate a *coup d'état* in 1974) would even argue that "the fight for the Liberation of Sinai cannot be considered a *Jihad*, for its aim is not the establishment upon earth of a single Muslim state." Well before the Anwar Sadat "Camp David" peace initiative, this and other groups made desertion from the "infidel" Egyptian army one of their major slogans.[9]

SAYYID QUTB'S INFLUENCE was on the ascendancy among the Muslim Brethren by the time of the Egyptian government crackdown on the movement in late 1954. He had provided the impetus and comprehensive ideology to that wing in the movement which, in a diffuse and vaguely articulate manner, came to believe during the 1940s that the divorce between Islam and modernity should be total, and that the danger of what was then simply called "Westernisation" was so tremendous, stealthily seeping into every nook and cranny, that the traditional educational process might not be able to stop it.

Qutb's influence continued to be felt during the discussions held in 1954–64 by the thousands of Muslim Brethren in Nasserist jails. It was a decade of imprisonment during which he also finished his Koranic commentary and a number of other books. The audience in these jails—mostly young believers, recently tortured—tended to be receptive to his arguments. Liberated in 1964, Qutb published in the following year the most outspoken statement of his views, *Signposts On the Road*. Gamal Nasser was not mistaken when he decided, upon reading it, that the message was subversive—all the more so as it cited precepts and concepts with the most impeccable theological credentials. Much like President Mubarak in the case of Abd al Salam Faraj, President Nasser took ideas most seriously. Sayyid Qutb was tried and executed in 1966.

The Message of the Jihad, Old & New

THE MESSAGE, however, endured. In part it was disseminated through former inmates of Nasser's jails, freed by Sadat and subsequently forming the base of all the extremist Muslim groups founded during the 1970s. Many others came to

[7] See Qutb's introduction to the 2nd ed. of *What Did The World Lose*, and Nadwi, *Memoirs of A Traveller To The Arab East* [in Arabic], 2nd ed., Beirut, 1975.

[8] Nadwi, *Western Civilization and Islam* (Lucknow, 1969), pp. 110–113.

[9] *Al-Ahram*, 12 July 1974; *Akhbar al-Yawm*, 31 May 975.

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embrace the message in the course of some spiritual search. They usually read Sayyid Qutb first, and then went back to his modern mentors, such as Maudoodi, or his medieval ones, Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Kathir. This was, for instance, the case of one of President Sadat's assassins, Abd al-Hamid Abd al-Al, who discovered these texts during a long stretch of army service in the desert.

Powerful new exponents articulated the message in terms befiting the changing circumstances. Shukri Mustafa, head of the *Takfir wa-Hijra* group which kidnapped and murdered a former Minister of Religious Affairs (1977), stood trial for his life, and forced the court to listen to long and reasoned expositions of his views. Society, argued Shukri Mustafa, is infidel (*takfir*), plagued as it is by modern *Jahili* vices. He went on to treat his judges to a disquisition on the intricacies of Ibn Taymiyya's legal methodology.[10] Abd al-Salam Faraj, who was to follow him to the scaffold, devoted much space in his *Absent Precept* to prove that the Sadat régime was indeed analogous to the Mongols. Thus a Holy War had to be waged against it without mercy.

> "Despite its crucial importance for the future of our Faith, the *Jihad* has been neglected, maybe even ignored, by men of religion of our age. They know, however, that *Jihad* is the only way to restablish and re-enhance the power and the glory of Islam which every true believer desires wholeheartedly. There is no doubt the idols upon earth will not be destroyed but by the sword—and thus establish the Islamic state and restore the Caliphate. This is the command of God and, each and every Muslim should, hence, do his utmost to accomplish this precept, having recourse to force if necessary."

The conclusions were drawn by Faraj in *The Absent Precept* (as quoted in *al-Ahram*, 14 December 1981):

> "There are some who say that the way to follow in order to restore the Muslim state is by propaganda, thus creating a basis for partisans. Yet this path, for the sake of which some wanted to forsake the *Jihad*, cannot lead to the desired goal. An Islamic state cannot be restablished without the struggle of a believing minority. . . . And how can one envision propaganda having a large success when all means of communication are now in the hands of infidels, of the morally depraved and of the enemies of the Faith? The only viable solution is to work to liberate the media from the stranglehold of these so-called Muslims. Moreover, only victory and the acquisition of power will gain us the adherence of the masses. Didn't God say in his Book (CX,1–2): 'When Allah's succour and triumph cometh thou shall see mankind entering the religion of Allah by droves'?
>
> There are some who say that the *Jihad* effort should concentrate nowadays upon the liberation of Jerusalem. It is true the liberation of the Holy Land is a legal precept binding upon every Muslim . . . but let us emphasise that the fight against the enemy nearest to you has precedence over the fight against the enemy further away. All the more so as the former is not only corrupted by the lackey of imperialism as well. . . .
>
> In all Muslim countries the enemy has the reins of power. That enemy is the present rulers. It is thus a most imperative obligation to fight these rulers. The Islamic *Jihad* requires today the blood and sweat of each Muslim."

There was, of course, a unity of theology and politics or, if you will, theory and practice:

> "The question on the agenda today is the following: Do we live in an Islamic state? One of the necessary conditions to make a state Muslim is that it be governed by the laws of Islam. Yet the laws regulating the life of the Muslims are infidel laws—laws conceived by infidels and imposed by them upon Muslims such as Allah said (*Koran*, V, 44): '*Whoso judgeth not according to what God hath revealed, they are the transgressors.*' Indeed, ever since the abolition of Caliphate in 1924 and the rooting out of Islamic laws and their replacement by laws made by infidels, the situation of Muslims resembles that of the believers under the yoke of the Mongols.
>
> Governments in the Islamic world today are in a state of apostacy. They have nourished at the table of Colonialism, be it Crusader, Communist, or Zionist. Of Islam they preserve nothing but its sheer name, although they pray, fast and pretend to be Muslims. Our *Sunna* (tradition) has determined that the apostate be punished more severely than he who had always been an infidel. The apostate must be killed even if he is in no position to fight while an infidel does not merit death in such a case.
>
> That apostacy—abandoning Islam—is a worse crime than infidelity one may learn from the *fatwa* of Ibn Taymiyya [on the Mongols]: 'Every group of Muslims which transgresses Islamic law . . . must be combated, even when they continue to profess the credo. . . .' "

Nor was it just a matter involving terrorists. These ideas recur in many Muslim Associations (*Gama'at*) in Egyptian universities. A book published in 1978, under the auspices of the Cairo University Muslim Association, centres its militant argument on the concept of "modern *Jahiliyya*."

[10] *Al-Siyasa* (Kuweit), 22 to 29 October 1979; cf. A. Abu Khayr, *My Memoirs on Jama'at al-Muslimin (Takfir wa-Hijra)* [in Arabic], Kuweit, 1980.

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References to the key verses (*Koran*, V, 44, 48) abound in press reports on the activities imputed to Muslim activists jailed during the month preceding Anwar Sadat's assassination.[11] It was no mere coincidence that a long exegesis of these verses was featured in the two issues of *Minbar al-Islam* (organ of the Ministry of Religious Affairs) published in the wake of the assassination. The brunt of its official argument was that the verses actually concern Muhammad's polemics against Jews and Christians (on the one hand) and Arab pagans (on the other). Current politics are not mentioned but the warning is clear: Beware of those who manipulate the Holy Writ.

IF THE WARNING was clear, it is far from certain that it was effective, though it continues to be drummed on the "religious pages" of Cairo's Friday newspapers. For these verses transmit in cultural code the frustrations and animosities *vis-à-vis* modernity, and they legitimise in Sunni terms the deeply-felt protest against the régime which upholds its values (through the "open-door policy", primacy of economic development over war, alliances with the West, etc.) It is beyond our scope here to discuss how much of this widespread hostility, especially among educated youth, is due to adherence to age-old norms and traditions and how much is the product of a kind of "sour grapes" syndrome: i.e. modernity creates "rising expectations" which in poor countries like Egypt cannot be fulfilled, at least not at the rate and scope that new, upwardly mobile generations have been led to expect. At any rate, the free-floating hostility towards modernity is undeniably there. The "modern *Jahiliyya*" concept conferred upon it an historical consistency and a theological cutting edge it did not otherwise possess.

ALL THROUGH the 1970s, the terrorist groups, as well as the student associations, fought against some of the same medieval "idols" as Ibn Taymiyya: e.g. the cult of tombs of holy men, the "arrogance" and undeserved position of the Copts. They would usually do so through sermons, leaflets, and wall newspapers; at times they had recourse to arson and pogroms as well.[12] Yet the main thrust was directed against modern "idols", which replaced those of the ancient *Jahiliyya*, creating a new brand of polytheism.

First and foremost, the mass media—the electronic media in particular—which bring modern values into the very citadel of the Islamic social structure, the home; and that in a manner unequalled in its efficiency (especially for the illiterate majority). Radio and television purvey hedonism, permissiveness, conspicuous consumption, and greed. Refraining from watching television and listening to the radio thus became a norm of conduct of the new zealots (including the conspirators of 6 October 1981), often imposed by force on neighbours and fellow-students. Films, the press, advertising, and books come in for their share—minor, but not negligible—in the torrent of vituperations.

Second on the list: the European-inspired legal system (particularly new accretions such as the 1979 Personal Status Law which modified Islamic injunctions on divorce); the educational system, especially at university level, where promiscuity is encouraged (colleges being "co-ed"), and women learn to give precedence to professional aspirations over their duties as homemakers and mothers.

Third and last among major idols which replace the *Hakimiyya* of God: economic growth at any cost. A "growth economy" entails a large foreign presence (experts, tourists) which contaminates by the example of its way of life. It introduces family planning, and it develops a usurious financial system.[13]

The obvious conclusion is summed up in the slogans of the Muslim Associations, that breeding ground of terrorism: "Egyptians . . . are not Muslims any more but assimilated and Europeanised." Hence: "Muslim society should be liberated from the *Jahiliyya*." The state is infidel—not unlike the Mongols of yore—as is its national flag (which one should not salute) and its army. The *Ulama* are no better, subservient as they are to their employer, the State, and to majority Sunni traditions.[14]

HOW WIDESPREAD are such views? This can be judged from the results of a recent Egyptian poll which shows that while the youth is overwhelmingly religious, only 28% would like to receive moral guidance from the *Ulama* and 32% refuse to do so.[15] It is indicative, indeed, of the modern character of these Islamic groups that men of religion are very rare in their leadership, composed mostly of

[11] M. A. Danawi, *The Greatest Islamic Movement of the Modern Age* (Cairo, 1978); *al-Ahram* (8 September 1981); *Mayo* (21 September 1981). Cf. M. A. al-Samman, *Islam and the Status of the Shari'a* (Cairo 1977, Tunis 1981).

[12] *al-Gumhuriyya* (2 July 1975); *Akhar Sa'a* (23 September 1981); *al-Musawwar* (30 October 1981).

[13] *Akhbar al-Yawm* 31 May 1975; *al-Musawwar* 11 September 1981; *al-Ahram* 2 November 1981; *Soldiers of the Call to Faith* [in Arabic], Cairo 1979, Ch.7 publication of *Shabab Muhammad* (Muhammad Youth).

[14] *Mayo* (16 November 1981); *Akhar Sa'a* (11 and 18 November 1981); A. Al-Sisi, *From Massacre to the Arena of Propaganda* [in Arabic], Cairo 1978, pp. 54–60. For a critique of the *Jahiliyya* concept by moderate Muslim Brethren, see S. Bahasnawi, *Power & the Question of Takfir of Muslims* [in Arabic], Cairo 1980.

[15] *Minbar al-Islam*, January 1982, p. 87.

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university students and modern professionals (like Faraj), all autodidacts in religious matters. (The two lecturers on theology brought to trial among the 24 conspirators in the Sadat assassination were acquitted.)

One could, of course, go about the anti-*Jahiliyya* endeavour in alternative ways—not by protest and opposition but rather by withdrawing from the corrupt society and turning the counter-culture of the Muslim Associations into a sort of counter-society, perhaps even spatially separated from the general society. Such tendencies can be discerned in the cases of young Muslims who withdraw to the desert. Others refuse to take jobs in the civil service and the public sector, many rely on arbitration by "holy men" in order not to turn to governmental courts of law.[16]

How deep, however, is the withdrawal? It often turns out to be just a phase, as in the case of 'Abd al-'Al. This Sadat assassin began his spiritual itinerary by quitting the army and setting himself up as a self-employed religious bookseller "in order to avoid contact with coquettish women and with men indifferent to Islam. . . ." A more telling example is the case of the *Takfir wa-Hijra* group which began by a migration (*Hijra*) from society, but also ended in terrorism.

These seem to be stations on a spiritual journey which is very much in line with the minority Sunni traditions. If subservience to the authorities was the general rule, there were medieval men of religion who chose to withdraw from any contact with a corrupt state. Some, like the famous mystic Ibn al-Adham, even refused to drink water from public conduits because they might have been paid for with revenues from "non-Koranic", i.e., illicit, taxes. Ibn Taymiyya represented the alternative option given to those dissidents who were unhappy with subservience—active opposition to authority.

The ubiquitous modern challenge—especially the "global village" of the media and increasingly pervasive state control—made the withdrawal response less and less tenable, at least for all but tiny groups. Long-term educational efforts, designed to convert society segment by segment to "true Islam", has today even less prospect of success than when Sayyid Qutb ceased to believe in it 30 years ago, before the age of transistor radios, television, and the gigantic growth of the higher educational system.

Seizure of power from the hands of "Mongol rulers" like Anwar Sadat thus came to be perceived as the only answer to the threat. In defining the nature of the threat as well as in justifying the means to counteract it, Ibn Taymiyya charted a course within the stream of Sunni traditions. Muslim youth are likely to continue to be held spellbound by this medieval theologian.

[16] *Mayo* (7 September 1981); *al-Gumhuriyya* (20 November 1981); *al-Musawwar* (5 February, 4 June 1982).

From Another Region

At the airport panic stirs.
Naive to imagine
our postcard-scribbed rendezvous
surviving such a journey.

In the office where I find you
lost in frigid documents
you recall that your suitcase
—misdirected to Siam—

holds wine, Russian verse.
But you can't remember
its colour, size
or other contents.

We spread our feast on grass.
Apple-cake, rye bread,
brandy, coarse red cheese.
Trees drip from the night.

The bottle bleeds.
A raindrop is swallowed
by a husk of bread.
Swans croak harshly from another region.

John Latham

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NOTES & TOPICS

London Commentary

Hitches, Hitches, All the Way

By Edward Pearce

"AND IT'S a long long time from May to September." Or rather, since much of the Government's constituency goes on holiday in the latter month, from May to October. By convention in this country the Government in choosing its date is a free agent, within the quinquennial term of the Act; but it will not go to the country in the filthy months from November to February included (Mr Heath made an exception in February 1974—and look what happened to him!), and March is very dubious because of budgets. Thereafter the better classes make off for their little places in the Dordogne, and in August the working class go to Ibiza. To hold an election in any of those months, apart from a little break in late May/early June, is like one of the parties confiscating up to a million votes from the other side.

So June it has to be . . . or October, or, in circumstances too extreme to think about, May of next year. Until very recently everything, including the advice of the Prime Minister's trusted colleagues, tended towards June. The government was ahead by a happy margin in the polls, poor Mr Michael Foot was going down with ratings which would have looked rather off for the Muswell Hill Fiend, the Labour Party was inspecting its own entrails; but disagreeable things were discernible in the middle distance. Inflation would be bumped off the low point it had come to (4.9%) by the fall in the pound. Perhaps more inflation would be unloaded by the after-effect of the unregrettably departed American supply-siders (and the US Department of Defense) who had left a jumbo-burger of a deficit which could only be monetised. On top of which in September we would (and will) be getting new unemployment figures influenced by the school-leavers. It might well be a plateau, even the summit, but not one you would care to be seen at.

"Soon is better", said the practical men. "Ye-es", said she. But on the other hand there were sturdy sycophants telling her to be true to her own rather butch image. "It isn't in the Prime Minister's nature to cut and run", they simpered. It is, of course, in everybody's nature to cut and run if the hole looks big enough. But there were better arguments. If the heroic school of the oil market (with the *Sunday Telegraph*'s Ivan Fallon well to the front) is right, the falling price of oil, whatever its complications, is going to do every manner of good—despite a battered pound—to both investment and the feared American-led inflation. By getting Mr Reagan out of the hole which Caspar Weinberger and the supply-siders had dug, it may do us no end of good.

Also, look at Australia. Nice Mr Hayden, surely the nearest thing to a likeable Australian politician, could be beaten by Malcolm Fraser; Robert Hawke, a man built in the image of his countrymen's awfulness (with added intelligence), could not! Suppose, they murmur over the sacramental gin where Conservatives gather to worship, that our secret weapon is diffused, that Michael Foot should be removed. One Labour friend of mine even speculated privately that a couple of poor afternoon showings by Mrs Thatcher at Question Time had been laid on specifically to show Mr Foot in a good light as a stronger leader than he is. "By God, the Tories have got wonderful discipline!", he said. "Look at the way they kept quiet, and didn't make a row, to back her up." This could be. The Conservatives are always most convincing at a low level; but it credits them with a lot of subtlety.

AND ANYWAY, how much difference does it make if Mr Foot does go? He is indeed unjustly unpopular. For reasons which his *Tribune* colleague George Orwell identified in the second part of *The Road to Wigan Pier*, English people will, if at a decreasing rate, vote Labour—but they detest Socialists. And Michael Foot, for all his niceness and his single-minded democratic instincts, is a Socialist by insignia. He dresses the part. Orwell, remember, saw two elderly men in pistachio shirts and khaki shorts get on his bus near Letchworth and recorded his neighbour's instant remark: "Socialists." Mr Foot, quite apart from knocking his head against the Cenotaph in Whitehall by turning up to the Remembrance Day service in a rather nice green donkey-jacket, has always favoured a combination of dark-coloured plain shirt, knitted tie, sports jacket and/or porcupine tweeds, topped off with hair at the length favoured by Liszt. The views, if mistaken, are unremarkable;

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the personality is most agreeable; but the public sees a sort of Martian or (if you like) an intellectual. The two have, after all, very much the same standing in Britain.

"One does not arrest Voltaire", said de Gaulle sententiously of Sartre when the old *philosophe* was creating a nuisance. One doesn't elect him either! Denis Healey, Foot's likely successor if the change-over comes soon, has accordingly kept his philosophical, literary, and musical side under a politic horse-blanket. One whiff of Healey, the Philosophy-of-Art man, and the broad masses would be off like a whippet race. (Come to think of it, he has been just as discreet over a knowledgeability about the better Burgundies which would leave Roy Jenkins writhing upstage.)

ARE WE INFLUENCED by irrational considerations? Of course we are. But whether that really means that Foot, and Foot alone, is propping up the Conservative lead is another matter. One of the reasons for Mrs Thatcher's leisurely shopping-around for dates is that there is *no* credible Labour leader. Healey would of course be better, but such is the laborious ballista-like mechanism for launching a new leader under the recently enacted procedure, that the alternative way out desperately suggested—a presentation of a temporary ticket combining Denis Healey and the rhetorically Left Neil Kinnock, resembles nothing so much as the democratic process favoured in 1957 by the late Lord Salisbury, who declared Mr Harold Macmillan to have "emerged." Somehow, I feel that Bobbity's Option is not for the Labour Party.

The irony about the new official election procedure is that it is like an inoperable gallows. Mr Foot cannot swiftly be disposed of without a hitch. With a tripartite collegiate system involving the constituencies and the unions as well as the Parliamentary Party, it will be hitches, hitches all the way. Healey will be opposed, not perhaps by Tony Benn (who has taken on a posthumous look and is talking about loyalty in the manner of a candidate without a hope), but by somebody, either a nominal champion of the Left or any of those ambitious politicians who at such a time would be demanding to take the bridge on the *Titanic*. The means to a smooth transition does not exist. Healey, for all that he would be a much better leader than Foot, is vulnerable to charges of wild inconsistency on Defence and to the sabotaging acts of self-destruction in which the Left specialise. With London's Labour boss Kenneth Livingstone on a state visit to the Fenian districts of Ulster, and Arthur Scargill trying (unsuccessfully) to call a national coal strike over the overdue closing of an extinct pit, the Labour Party does not need the evil Right-wing media to make hostile propaganda. It rolls its own.

IT IS A further sign of trouble that Neil Kinnock at the age of 40 should, quite seriously, be thought of not just as deputy leader but as leader in his own right, leaping in the process rather more than a generation from Foot, who was a national figure before the elder Kinnocks were wed. He is exceedingly nice, very funny, and has a Welsh line in vivid comic effect through hyperbole, like those novels of Gwyn Thomas which never quite came off. But, watching regularly from the Press Gallery, I can only wonder that the thinness of his material, the carelessness about homework, the vulnerability even to rather commonplace Government Ministers if they stick to the boring details, is not better appreciated. Kinnock might indeed be good for a snap election, but if Mrs Thatcher postponed the voting by six months it would take just so long for him to be disastrously over-exposed.

DOES ALL OF THIS imply grounds for Conservative assurance? "Up to a point, Lord Copper." Two things and two only keep the Tory plane in the air: the self-eviscerating genius of Labour and the strange momentum struck by Mrs Thatcher. It is astonishing for a party presiding over three million unemployed to have a strong lead in the polls. But it is Margaret Thatcher's peculiar grim talent that she has communicated through her own rather bleak and realistic view of life that whatever the immediate causes of trouble, we had it coming to us. So much of politics is made up of promises and gifts, rhetoric and oblivion, that her personal acceptance that "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread" has been communicated. We obscurely understand that Britain has, over twenty years, opted out of competing on productivity and wages, and has taken whatever self-solacing deal would buy temporary ease and long-term decay.

Her opponents within the Tory Party have never looked convincing. Sir Ian Gilmour has rushed into print precisely at the moment when inflation seems to be under control, calling for more spending and more corporatism—precisely the sort of ju-ju which failed for Macmillan, Wilson and Heath. The Tory wets have no stomach for any conflict except, conceivably, with their own leader; and given the sententious hash they made of their last assault on her when the going suited them much better (in October 1981), they don't on their own look much of a threat to anything except the beer they mutter into.

THE GOVERNMENT has one other possible advantage. The SDP Liberal Alliance, despite some recent by-election excitement, is an uncertain force beyond by-elections.

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It ought to be. The SDP is almost custom-built for Sir Ian's sort of Tory, who wants a better class of Harold-Wilsonism under another name. It has a miasmal opacity which the safe-playing, "I'm really very liberal", political zilch-thinker could quite take to. Its ideas are elaborate to the point of being cantilevered, and involve a further extension of the local government bureaucracy which should make anyone who has lived in this country for the last decade or two feel quite at home. But its battlefield politics have neither strategy nor tactics. If David Owen had been elected leader, something big might have happened. Owen is arrogant but he is capable of learning about his arrogance. He is also alert, active, humorous, unpompous—and the only front-line Social Democrat who impresses the House.

Poor Roy Jenkins is the spluttering ghost of himself. Three years of the Asiatic deference with which Continental eminences are treated—large official cars, *Monsieur le Ministre*, absurd salaries, the whole *beni-oui-oui* abjection appropriate in his phase as a temporary Belgian, have totally disqualified him for the rough business of English politics, which though good-natured are tough. You get shouted at and you shout back. Hecklers are in a contest. Either you cream them early or, over the months, they peck you to death. The Speaker of the House of Commons, who detests the ruder element, stretches his authority to protect Jenkins. But it shouldn't be necessary. None of the lower elements take on David Owen, for the very good reason that he can be relied upon to give them a metaphorical thick ear. British politics is for the young and the fit, and Jenkins's years seem to sit worse upon him than those of the older Foot.

A soft, purplish man, speaking in accents appropriate to the court of Edward VII, he comes late to the House, does not linger long, and fails at each attempt to make any impression with his speeches beyond a reminiscent querulousness tinged with self-regard. He has made a terrible mistake in coming back into politics. He has no common touch at all, and relies upon a coterie whom he reduces to sycophancy. It is all very sad; but the sooner it is acknowledged the better for his own party, which at present contains more quarrels about trifling petty personal things than there is room for in a larger organisation.

THE LIBERALS are an altogether more considerable force, as they demonstrated in organisation at by-elections. But it is not clever of their local activists to show so much ill-disguised contempt for the SDP. However they are very much more professional, and in "Community Politics" (horrible as the phrase itself is) they have discovered not only a way to win improbable seats but an actual function for MPs and candidates more valuable than all the therapeutic committees and the other work-out routines devised at the Westminster Gymnasium to solace the unpromoted.

I am rather taken with MPs who get the kitchens of little old ladies in council-flats painted for them. The rather insufferable Mr Douglas Hogg (Cons., Marylebone) is said to have described time spent in the Commons before entering Government as a total waste—not if he got a few kitchens painted it wouldn't be.

But with all their virtues—and they are quite likely to pick up a few seats (mostly from the Conservatives in areas of neglect or excessive security)—I do not see the Liberals alone making the breakthrough. The electoral law is against them, and it is a measure of Sir Ian Gilmour's estrangement from his party that he is now advocating Proportional Representation.

For with Proportional Representation the Liberal/SDP Alliance would score heavily, more heavily than in any current poll, turning 20% of votes into 130 seats and because of such prospects actually polling *better* than 20%. The Alliance is a frail thing in itself, depending on a few individual members of quality and the indefatigable electioneering talents of its Liberal components, but it rests heavily upon negation, garlanded by the glories of what it is not. As a result, it is certain of by-election triumphs. By-elections are a little like *Fasching* in Munich (where adultery committed during *Fasching* is not adultery for the purposes of the law). Given a general election, I would still expect the Alliance to wither like Congressman John Anderson in the last US Presidential election (though, in fairness, it is a weird plant, which withers and flowers at high speed without regard for season). But it has been driven into the absurd position—despite Bermondsey, despite Darlington—of being much more damaging to the Tories than to Labour. It can only seriously trouble Labour at by-elections, and just might come up trumps long-term at Chippenham and Devizes, but that is a rather pointless exercise for a revisionist organisation which talked about "a realignment on the Left." The industrial North of England (of which Darlington is a mild example) and Scotland will stand fast for Labour, any Labour, in a General Election. The Tories cannot lose direct to Labour anywhere, but they can lose enough obliquely to the Alliance (though the odds are that the Tory *laager* will hold as well) to make a coalition of wet and centre marginally thinkable, at the expense of Thatcher, Howe, Tebbit, and Biffen—the robust wing of the Party.

WE HAVE HAD a lot of rotten compromises over the last twenty years, mostly from government—abject

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surrenders to unions, mindless printings of money, the irresponsible establishment of wasteful bureaucracies in Health and Local Government. Such an election result would be the worst cop-out of all, a vote of confidence in every last worst thing which the 1950s, '60s and '70s have brought us. In June, October, or May 1984, an election should be about not going back to *that* consensus.

Friedrich Hayek on the Crisis

THE WORLD ECONOMY *is in the grip of the most protracted recession since the end of World War II. We have market-economy models for overcoming that recession, and we have socialist models. What do you think of President Reagan's market-economy model?*

HAYEK: The American President is moving in entirely the right direction. So why are things happening so slowly in America? I have serious doubts about the famous theory that you can increase tax revenue by cutting taxes. To a certain extent you undoubtedly can; but the quantitative factor is very much open to question. I wonder whether the expectations based on Reagan's announcement that he was going to balance his budget by means of tax cuts were not over-optimistic from the start. Nor has Reagan in fact managed to do so. This has got the President into enormous difficulties.

—Isn't high arms expenditure also a factor here?

HAYEK: I am convinced Reagan is right not to reduce arms expenditure. World peace depends upon America staying strong. We already have so many atomic weapons that a nuclear war would mean the end of civilisation: so the discussion as to whether arms increases intensify the threat of war is nonsense. In fact it's no longer a question of whether nuclear war can be avoided or not; the real problem is whether we have got ourselves into a situation in which the Soviets can intimidate us to such an extent that we knuckle under completely. We can't afford that kind of weakness. Ergo, the West must stay at least as strong as the Soviet Union. It is a complete delusion—not, I think, necessarily a malicious one but to some extent Communist-inspired—when they try to make us believe that the arms increases needed to achieve a balance increase the threat of nuclear war. Instead it becomes less. I don't believe any Russian is daft enough to start a nuclear war. But if ever the Soviets are in a position to intimidate us with military superiority, they won't hesitate to do whatever they want.

—To go back to Reagan's economic and budgetary policy: you don't regard his market-economy plan as wrong, only some of the methods used?

HAYEK: Yes.

—In Britain Mrs Thatcher is trying the drastic market-economy remedy of strict, not to say brutal monetarism. There too, there is no sign yet of any sweeping success—why is that?

HAYEK: The Prime Minister was prevented from doing it quickly enough. It is politically feasible to survive even 20% unemployment for six months; it is not politically feasible to survive 10% unemployment for three years. So you have to move fast. Mrs Thatcher knows that, but she was balked by the distribution of political forces. She may also herself be suffering slightly from the delusion that a reduction in inflation is an achievement in itself. It's only a step in the right direction, which does not become effective until you have really stopped inflation. You first have to get inflation down to zero; then there is a good prospect of a new upturn. The boom may even come very quickly.

FRIEDRICH AUGUST VON HAYEK *was born in Vienna in 1899, studied under Ludwig von Mises, and spent many years teaching in London and at the University of Chicago. He returned to Freiburg University in 1976. One of the world's most distinguished economists, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Economics in 1974. Among his books are the three volumes of "Law, Legislation and Liberty" (Routledge, 1973–79) and "Studies in Philosophy, Politics and Economics" (n.e. University of Chicago Press, 1980). His previous articles in* ENCOUNTER *include "The Miscarriage of the Democratic Ideal" (March 1978), and "Remembering My Cousin, Ludwig Wittgenstein" (August 1977).*

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—In Germany the SPD and the trade unions have launched a campaign to brand the economic and budgetary policy of President Reagan and Mrs Thatcher as a "Neo-Conservative" ideology that in social terms seeks to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. Is Neo-Conservatism the contemporary intellectual expression of the idea of the free market economy?

HAYEK: It brings together various things that are justified by the fact that they represent the only way back to the market economy, and that is also the only way to preserve a free society. Other interests may put their oar in from time to time, but there is no truth at all in the Socialist claim that this happens at the expense of the poor and to the advantage of the rich. No one has done better out of capitalism than the working class. Granted, capitalism created the proletariat, but not by making anyone any the worse off; rather by enabling many to survive who would not otherwise have done so. In this sense the poor have always done better than the rich: they owe capitalism their lives.

—In France President Mitterrand is employing a socialist model for overcoming the economic crisis. What do you think of this experiment?

HAYEK: It was doomed to failure from the start, and for France it will mean a serious retrograde step towards a more primitive system.

—Looking at things now from the point of view of political economy, which of course must take constant account of social relations as well, and taking all the experiences of crisis management in the USA, Great Britain, and France together, what are your conclusions?

HAYEK: That the only way in which we can maintain our present standard of living is by a radical return to the market economy—and this means doing away with inflation completely. We must not only combat socialism; we must also forget about Keynesianism.

MAY I REFER *to an interview we had with you almost exactly two years ago? At that time you predicted a permanent economic crisis but added that, setting foot in Germany, Switzerland, or Japan, one could still have the feeling: "Perhaps I'm in a lifeboat. . . ." That's what you said then. Now you're back in Germany. Do you feel as if you're in "a lifeboat"?*

HAYEK: It's certainly deceptive, because Germany still gives the impression of great prosperity. People are well off, they're doing all right, they go abroad on holiday a lot. You wonder, when you're not actually in the industrial areas, where all the unemployed masses are. I saw and experienced the serious unemployment of 50 years ago. Then it meant great poverty; at the moment I don't see any great poverty. Of course, when I look at the shift of opinions, I find cause for concern . . . because of the intellectual tendency in the time of depression—down with the market economy, up with interventionism and even (heaven help us) protectionism—all that I find alarming.

—Is that perhaps the consequence of the fact that intelligent young people in Germany are offered very little intellectual leadership?"

HAYEK: It is Germany's misfortune that an entire generation of potential intellectual leaders died prematurely. I'm talking about Ludwig Erhard, Wilhelm Röpke, Walter Eucken, Franz Böhm—all men of whom I had the highest hopes. Even today there are talented people doing some very fine things. But we lack someone with the gift of inspiring the young people, and that is most disturbing.

—At this moment West Germans are in an election campaign. The SPD and the trade unions are fighting the Kohl government's consolidation course with the slogan "Upward redistribution (Umverteilung von unten nach oben)." *This represents the expression of that desire for social justice that is the ideal of "democratic socialism." What kind of priority can social justice have when it is a question of producing sufficient economic growth to overcome mass unemployment?*

HAYEK: I regard "social justice" as a nonsensical term—basically it means nothing at all, because it expresses desires that can never be fulfilled. Whenever you start discussing such desires you realise that the people who defend them have absolutely no clear idea of what the principles of social justice might be. The only practicable principle is . . . a striving for equality. But if you attribute "egalitarianism" to the supporters of social justice they protest as if they wanted to have nothing to do with it. It's a fearfully dangerous watchword, which unfortunately has lost less of its attraction in Germany than it has elsewhere in the West.

—But do we have the concept of the "social market economy"?

HAYEK: May I tell you the story of when I last spoke to Dr Ludwig Erhard? We were alone for a moment, and he turned to me and said, "I hope you don't misunderstand me when I speak of a social market economy (*Sozialen Marktwirtschaft*). I mean by that that the market economy as such is social, not that it needs to be made social. . . ." If

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you had to *make* the market economy "social", the concept of social justice would immediately come into play. With that you can justify every demand that cannot be reconciled with having the market determine prices and incomes. There's no better way of destroying the market economy than with the concept of "social justice."

—The SPD and the German trade unions are demanding a supplementary levy as a special tax to be imposed on the so-called Reichen, *the rich, in order to finance government employment programmes. Is that a way out of the crisis?*

HAYEK: Certainly not. We've been suffering from progressive taxation for 70 years, and that would simply be a reinforcement of the progression under another name. I made myself unpopular years ago when I attacked the whole ideal of progressive taxation. Any reinforcement of the progression I can only regard as disastrous.

—Do you regard the economic and budgetary policy adoted by Chancellor Kohl and Ministers Stoltenberg and Lambsdorff as a "free market economy policy"?

HAYEK: I have a very positive impression of Lambsdorff. I object to his *FDP* party on the grounds that it was unforgivable to keep the Socialists in power for so long. I must admit, however, that with the exception of Franz Josef Strauss, I know no other politician in Germany with more sensible ideas about economic policy than Lambsdorff. My great regret is that the two of them don't get on better together; I'd like to see Franz Josef Strauss and Lambsdorff directing this country's economic policy together.

*—The current campaign slogan of the CDU is "Vote for a boom (*Den Aufschwung wählen*)." If Chancellor Kohl were to ask your advice as to the surest and swiftest way of bringing about a boom, what would you recommend he did?*

HAYEK: There's a contradiction in terms in trying to bring about a boom swiftly and at the same time surely. It has to be a slow and steady process. First, you see, you must really achieve an end to inflation, and that alone will take some time. If a clear course were to be steered in this direction, a mood of optimism would set in, people would start investing, and we'd have the normal process of recovery—at a time when, with consumer demands not yet rising, future investments are already rising and consequently the upturn begins. Gradually unemployment would be reduced as well.

YOU HAVE SAID *you are confident about the prospects for restoring the market economy in the world. But you are no longer as confident as you were as far so developments in Germany are concerned. What's the reason for your pessimism?*

HAYEK: In America and in parts of Europe too the market economy is finding a new response among intelligent young people. I find that cheering. If the politicians don't destroy the world in the next fifteen or twenty years, then I'm confident, because then there'll be a generation coming up that has rediscovered a feeling for economic freedom and responsibility. On the other hand I'm not convinced that this movement, which has started in Germany too, has really taken root yet. I have the feeling that German enthusiasm for the market economy is rather on the decrease.

—Is that what disturbs you so much about Germany?

HAYEK: Another thing is the rigity of the trade unions over wages policy, which in Germany has now almost reached the point it has reached in England. I always used to make a point of my conviction that the great German post-War boom was largely due to the trade unions. The German trade-union leaders had experienced inflation, most of them twice over. They were sensible enough to give way when they were told: "Don't ask for more, it will lead to inflation. . . . " I'm afraid that older generation of trade-union leaders has disappeared from the scene. The trade-union movement is now in the hands of a younger generatiuon of leaders who are no longer so impressed with the dangers of inflation. It is in the nature of trade-union activity that real wages always have to rise. The fact that a steady change in the direction of relative wages can now no longer occur is affecting the economic use of available manpower. I'm afraid that the economy in the West German Federal Republic is going to be much more inhibited by trade-union policy in the years to come than it has been over the last 30 years.

—You mean that while the "English disease" is slowly on the wane in Great Britain we are now getting a "German disease"?

HAYEK: There's that risk. I see more and more similarities between the German trade-union system and the—to me more familiar—English trade-union system; and I'm afraid that the hopes workers place in the trade-union leadership could push that leadership into a policy that might severely impede further economic recovery in Germany.

—Your optimism regarding the renaissance of the market economy in the world is in contrast to the

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widespread feeling of pessimism that not only the international banking system but also the world financial system are in terminal crisis. I am referring to the enormous debts of countries like Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia. Also the collapse of the price of oil, with the result that even more countries could be approaching the verge of bankruptcy (as the example of Nigeria shows).

HAYEK: I find these things disturbing too, but for a quite different reason. I'm afraid that these exceptional strains on the organisation of international credit will lead to an acceleration of inflation. I can imagine a situation in which many governments would keep their ailing banking institutions alive by simply printing the necessary cash. That is one of the biggest dangers in the present situation. I can only say that I'm glad it is not my responsibility to decide between the twin problems of either letting major banks go bust or providing the means for inflation.

—Journalists are always invoking the memory of the world economic crisis of 1930–31. Do you think that's an exaggeration?

HAYEK: The stupidity of politicians may very easily lead to a similar outcome to that of 1930–31. If the politicians are driven any further into protectionism, we're in for exactly the same mess as we got into then.

Great Temptations

Maids and matrons numbering some fifteen hundred
Were waiting in their aprons to be married to Jesus.
But not a whit was Mistress Southcott flustered.

Not a wit, Satan reminded himself. It was useless
To insinuate that the Son of God was no polygamist.
"O come, Lord", they were singing in sisterly chorus,
"Come quickly!" Was this what they meant by Methodist?

Why was he fated to strive with this female, he wondered.
Simply so she could boast of repelling his advances?—
Like the blowing of rams' horns, or so her lot reckoned,
Would repel the Frenchies. If only she'd try her chances
With Boney! But worldly emperors weren't up to scratch.

The Lord, he proposed, might appreciate a better class
Of conversation, supposing he had time for it. *Spirit*
Shall speak unto spirit, she said. But if it came to pass
That the match was postponed, how would the ladies
While the long hours away, asked the Father of Fibs—
In artistic pursuits, so proper to prospective brides?
They would talk of babies, they would sew and make cribs.

Not up to scratch, said the fiend archly. Listen, Joanna,
I can make you an eminent stylist, your books best sellers.
Like Mr Macpherson, like Mr Sterne, like Pamela and Shamela?
No, she cried. *Style is a snare. Meaning is what matters!*

He had failed again. Again she would wallow in sanctity.
All he could do was slip a lottery ticket among her relics.
Why did the crazy prosper? Why were the stupid so happy?
(Those to come would credit her existence but not Old Nick's.)

D. J. Enright

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Portraying a Grisly Image

Art & Education—By GEORGE SZIRTES

ON 27 MAY 1977 the *Daily Express* ran a story entitled "The Fine Art of Killing Budgies." It concerned a court case in Leeds where two students of Fine Art at the local polytechnic were charged with ill-treating and causing unnecessary suffering to six budgerigars and twelve white mice. They did this in the course of a performance which consisted of placing the tethered budgies and imprisoned mice in the centre of a circle of television sets and glass panels, entering the arena masked and armed with metal bars, smashing the television sets, and commencing to shoot the budgies and mice with air rifles. At this point the audience rebelled and began to assault the students, thus ruining, in the words of a defence witness, "a very neat and succinct piece of work" which was partly intended to demonstrate the very fact that a modern apathetic audience would sit passively and watch anything. One of the accused pointed out that there was rather too much importance attached to the activities of the RSPCA as compared, say, with those of the NSPCC. He finished by saying: "Art to me is an expression of my environment. If I portray a grisly image then you have only society to blame." To which Mr Pollard for the prosecution replied that "This was sanctimonious claptrap."

Prosecution was referring to the statement here, not the act itself. The act, or its kind, had a certain honourable tradition in the realm of performance art, stretching back to the exhibitions of the Dadaists and Surrealists. The defendants were both honourable men. After all, there were better-known artists who "portrayed a grisly image" by lying in baths full of entrails, by pulling faces in photographs or even by slowly mutilating themselves. True, these sufferings were inflicted only on their own bodies, but compared to such surely budgies or mice were very small fry indeed. The defendant's statement lacked, however, something of the sharpness and originality of earlier polemics, and Mr Pollard remained unimpressed.

But was it fair to expect a visual artist to justify his instincts in quite another medium? Many artists do rely on a body of written work to validate their actions. Quite often there is little else. Five or six pages of typed paper may accompany a single photograph. The act is "documented": such and such an action has been performed by person *X*, an artist, who, by making a record of it in such a way and by presenting this record in a gallery, separates his action out of the mass of meaningless occurrences and gives it status. The very "text" itself may be presented as the work of art. Ian Breakwell's *Walking Man Diary 1975–78*, consisting of photographs of an itinerant figure "in a baggy overcoat", and annotated by Breakwell, according to a reviewer in *Arts Review*, "in his now familiar hand", was a metaphor for social struggle: "The imagined journey of this seeker past shop windows displaying the useless trappings of materialism engendered by a capitalist economy is described vividly in Breakwell's written interpolations." (Breakwell's writing is a rather feeble version of the kind of journalese used by Roy Fisher in his earlier prose poems.)

Even where the work itself is primarily visual it often needs to be buttressed by an edifice of theoretical writing. The role of the art press is crucial in the making of any reputation. This fact is not in itself new or surprising. One thinks of Diderot's denunciation of Boucher, Baudelaire's defence of Daumier, Ruskin's of Turner and so forth. In the late Fifties and early Sixties no artist could be taken really seriously without the imprimatur of Clement Greenberg. How else was one to judge the merits of a dab of black on white? It needed the knower, the sage whose word was Law. The role of Greenberg in making a reputation was more decisive than that of Diderot or Ruskin, but then the art itself was so much more difficult to understand. People who could handle ideas in readable prose were certain to be influential, not least among artists.

Today, however, the prose employed by reviews of contemporary art is far less readable: rebarbative without being informed, complex without being concrete. Nor are the correspondence columns any more reassuring. Denunciations and defences of artists whose differences are as those between a louse and a flea are conducted in terms which, while ambitious, are no more clear or eloquent than those

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used by the student at Leeds. All the emotion and ill-feeling that overflows from such exchanges is little more than the fury of those driven into tighter and tighter corners with fewer and fewer allies. It would not be fruitful to compare the schisms of today with the battles between the Rubenists and Poussinists, or the Romantics and Classicists, or even those small hand-to-hand struggles that were so frequent between factions in the earlier School of Paris. The School of Paris may seem to be a tempting comparison, and indeed the temper of the debates may be similar, but the assumptions beneath are quite different. The argument then was about who was winning the race of Modernism: essentially all were heading in the same direction. Now there is no agreement about the direction in which the competitors ought to be running. Modernism has become a Caucus Race. The greater the loss of confidence in the very existence of the track, the hotter and denser the clouds of rhetoric have become, the more important also the recourse to first principles and to half-understood vocabularies of related disciplines—in short to the written word.

EDWARD LUCIE-SMITH IN HIS INTRODUCTION to *Movements in Art Since 1945* [1] spoke of the post-war period as a phase of "late-modernism" which had had "a remarkably long run." He used the term "ossification of modernism" in the sense of a "re-sifting and revaluation of ideas which were already known before the war." Harold Rosenberg before him had warned of the dangers of art becoming "a style", and of an attitude that condemned certain works because "they fail to obey the rules of vanguard art." More recently the critic Peter Fuller wrote a book actually titled *Beyond the Crisis in Art*,[2] which, despite its fulminations and occasional silliness, asked some serious questions about the general assumptions of Modernism. The loss of faith is becoming more and more apparent. Even though Tom Wolfe's *From Bauhaus to Our House*[3] seems to concern itself primarily with the inaptness of applying European solutions in architecture to indigenous American problems, it does so in terms that have a deeper resonance. The dramatic centre of the book is surely the Pruitt-Igoe episode where a Bauhaus-inspired building project had become so unpopular and unworkable that in Wolfe's words "for the first time in the fifty-year history of worker housing someone . . . finally asked the client for his two cents' worth." The chant of "Blow it up! Blow it up!" which followed is reported by Wolfe with some relish and approbation. There is a very strong implication here that the sophisticates were wrong

[1] Thames & Hudson, 1975.
[2] Writers & Readers Publishing Cooperative, 1981.
[3] Jonathan Cape, 1982.

Books by HAROLD ROSENBERG

Until his death in 1978, Harold Rosenberg, art critic for *The New Yorker*, chronicled a rapidly changing period in American art. His imaginative grasp of the contemporary artist's aesthetic and cultural situation influenced not only the field of art criticism but also the practice of art and the process of selection that proclaimed the importance of such major postwar figures as Barnett Newman, Arshile Gorky, Jackson Pollock, Franz Kline, Mark Rothko and Wellem de Kooning. The University of Chicago Press publishes a number of his books:

Discovering the Present
Three Decades in Art, Culture & Politics cloth, £8.00
The Tradition of the New
paperback, £6.40
The Anxious Object
paperback, £6.40
Artworks and Packages
paperback, £6.40

Later in the summer three more books by Harold Rosenberg will become available in paperback:

Actor and Actor
Making the Self
The De-Definition of Art
Art on the Edge
Creators and Situations

CHICAGO
The University of Chicago Press
126 Buckingham Palace Road,
London SW1W 9SD

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and that the instincts of uneducated Joe Public were right, and that this principle could be carried through the whole realm of modern art, "the game" as he later calls it, that young artists have to join in order to achieve "major status."

What was the crisis that Peter Fuller's book attempted to look beyond? It was obvious to him that art had become more and more vacuous, undergoing a kind of self-emptying or *kenosis*, which had finally robbed it of all vigour. This self-emptying could be seen to result in an accelerating process of fragmentation. Whereas there had been clearly marked "major" developments throughout the Forties, Fifties, Sixties and even the early Seventies, these had now given way to some seven or eight years of archaeology, a desperate search for a hidden stream that had lost power in the Sixties in the self-consciousness of Pop Art. The ironic overkill of that movement questioned the whole basis of artistic experience. It was very costly fun. It was natural for the aged Marcel Duchamp to protest that his philosophical gestures were being taken by the Neo-Dadaists for aesthetic ones. People were actually admiring the urinal for its *form*, he believed. But he was being rather too simple. The new aesthetic element comprised not only formal appreciation but an appreciation of his philosophical gesture as an act of historic chic. It was not the reasons for this way of behaving, but the way of behaving itself that was attractive. Pop Art made an icon of irony and appearance and became a more deadening form of nihilism than Dada itself ever was. Here if anywhere was "the game" that Wolfe refers to, and it was a game practised by many young artists at college. They were set by their tutors to make "blow-ups" of household objects, to sort through comic-books and old advertising posters, and to combine elements of these with wit and detachment. The Sixties were the age of "cool." It would take a long time to thaw out again.

"Cool" was a form of sophistication. You had to know things, albeit in a superficial way. There was no time to get to know anything other than superficially. What mattered was not even that you *were* sophisticated but that you seemed to be. Modernism began to feed off itself in a very *knowing* way. Roy Lichtenstein very slowly and deliberately drew an "Abstract Expressionist" brush stroke. This was rather different from earlier practice. Dadaism and Surrealism were nourished by their antitheses, a distinctly archaic conception of art as illustration and moral uplift. Vanguard art, to use Rosenberg's term, hadn't itself thought like that for sixty years, if not a lot longer. But Pop Art was "knowing" about Modernism itself and about its predecessors. It guyed its own side. Delacroix, Botticelli and others were "mentioned" in ironic terms. There was no love involved in this, it was simply a form of conversation with some tendency to social comment. This last of the "major" international movements put paid to the idea of innocent impulse. The lyrical had been hijacked. The movement made an enormous impression on the young. It combined the freaky advantages of Surrealism with an easy and exclusive range of reference. The ways forward were more problematical.

THERE WERE IN FACT several ways adopted, and one ought to list some of these if only to emphasise the multiplicity of forms. Pop Art had brought back representation in the photographic sense. The Super Realists of the early- and mid-Seventies, such as Pearlstein, Estes and Goings, applied a meticulous but emotionally detached technique to pictures that might indeed have passed for photographs. Putting minor variations aside, this was an act of double irony: art having, according to the popular myth, freed itself from mere representation, now took to representing the appearance of photographs, photographs moreover that if judged as such would have had few traditionally artistic pretensions. Pop Art canonised the banal by neatly putting inverted commas round it. Performers such as Gilbert and George wore the inverted commas round themselves, so to speak. They proclaimed themselves "living sculptures."

The conceptual artists applied the same principle to banal occurrences. People carried planks on their heads from Place A to Place B, or wandered round galleries accompanied by video films of themselves wandering round galleries. "The game" was metaphysical and conducted between different levels of irony. The real landscape itself became the working surface. Whether the artistic act took the form of minimal adjustment to an existing landscape or a modification of it by the erection of enormous curtains across valleys, the technique used was that of complex irony. If form was to be "created" at all it had to refute form, to become minimal and absolute. But what has happened to the interest centred on artists like Sol le Witt, Robert Morris and Dan Flavin? One ought also to mention the last throws of colour field painting, the later and sillier manifestations of Surrealism, the public masochism of Expressionists, the revival of social context (Victor Burgin's posters, artists clad in Mao suits building cooperative shacks in the ICA), essays in ironic triviality (Anthony Green, Beryl Cook et al.) and *mélanges* of all these (Joseph Beuys's performances and objects, for example). Many things—and this is just a selection—appeared and disappeared. But some artists, particularly the major exponents of Pop Art, continued to increase their reputations, Hockney, Kitaj and Tom Philips among them. However, all these three, while maintaining a façade of sophistication, irony, etc., began to make strange assertions about the necessity of returning to some form of life drawing. "Back to the

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Life Class" was indeed a curious slogan for the times. One might as well have cried, "Back to School."

THIS SEEMS an opportune moment to return to Peter Fuller. A disciple of John Berger, that is to say a Marxist, he sees the manifestations of the Seventies as a phase of late monopoly capitalism. He laments the decline of the individual creative artist in a "flux of ideologies", and the loss of the creative impulse to the imperatives of the "historicist process." If the cries of "Back to the Life Class" sounded strange coming from Pop ironists, surely such lamentations sound even stranger coming from a Marxist, for whom, if anyone, an historical process ought to be beyond reproach. But of course Fuller said "historicist" not "historical", which was perhaps clever of him. Yet in the same chapter he quotes approvingly from Marcuse: "The autonomy of art contains the categorical imperative: 'things must change'." Perhaps the art of the Seventies for him was a case of *plus ça change*. . . . He certainly met with a great deal of derision and spite in the art press when the book was published, not least because of this chapter, a spite, it must be admitted, that his own ebullient approach rather tended to invite.

"Historicist" is an acute choice of term, though. It implies an over-meticulous attention to what has been in the recent past considered successful, a sort of modishness which is concerned with identifying some particular current within Modern Art and then plugging into it. What matters in this state of mind is not experience itself but the mastering of a correct idiom. That idiom was ironic and monolithic. Playing was allowed but not pleasure. A whole language of primary experience had been lost somewhere along the line: the subject of the conversation was conversation. Fuller is in favour of "re-examining the full gamut of expression *of* and *through* the human body" in order to "identify one way in which the art of the past, and of other cultures, can 'speak to us' without invoking eternal essences or any such nonsense."

"Any such nonsense" is more dismissive than it need be. One could read it as a sign of embarrassment, the kind of embarrassment that leads us back to irony. It seemed to reviewers that Fuller was being embarrassing enough anyway. Some spoke of his "disgusting expressionism", of his thought processes as a kind of "masturbation." Just who was being embarrassed by what?

The climate which bred the ironies of Pop Art would naturally pose sophistication against naivety, and naivety is embarrassing. Students who painted from life or from imagination rather than from art itself were told dismissively that they were "merely illustrators." It was naive to paint pictures of apples because you liked apples: art is art and apples are

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apples, the two things were quite distinct. Only unsophisticated minds could think otherwise. What did they think the whole effort of the last twenty years had been about? They ought to be ashamed of themselves.

AN ART COLLEGE COURSE is not long. In England it consists of three years in a polytechnic following one year of preparatory Foundation Studies. At eighteen the student leaves school having directed his efforts, as far as Art is concerned, to mastering an element of academic painting or drawing as demanded by the Examination Boards. He will have developed some visual fluency in a restricted sense. A year of Foundation spins him through basic courses in the print processes, some 3D techniques, a smattering of Art History and Complementary Studies, and perhaps some life drawing on a larger, freer scale than at school. The year passes quickly, and before the end he is applying once again to colleges, this time for degree courses. By the end of the first six weeks of a Fine Art course he has become sophisticated, ironic etc. He has begun to understand "the game." Just over a year ago he was drawing Still Lifes, painting things called Imaginative Compositions, and was finding it hard to understand Picasso. Now, without having been "taught" anything in the conventional sense, he understands that Art must have its reasons, that it must be supported by the canon of modernism, and particularly by the body of writing concerning it: not that he ever needs to *read* it carefully, as long as he understands its drift. His own natural impulses must be tempered by these factors if he is to become "major" and "significant." One must wear the right dress to be admitted to the party. But what is the right dress? That is what he has to find out.

But the party has gone rather quiet. Perhaps people have fallen asleep or gone home. And here are writers on art, who are Marxists and therefore by definition members of the party, who are telling you to put your school uniform back on and make figures out of clay. Here is Peter Fuller in a recent article on Art Education visiting an unnamed college: "The first student I saw was hanging amorphous blobs of whitish material on lengths of string. . . ." Wrong. "The next student . . . showed me a short, poorly-made film of herself writhing around, inevitably, in a sack. . . ." (Oh dear, that *inevitably*!) Wrong. "Another student . . . had spent a long time making . . . it was hard to make sense of what he was doing." Wrong. But here was a "difficult student" according to the college authorities, with "psychological problems", one who was "on probation" and made clay heads. "The work she showed me was an extremely sensitive piece of naturalistic portraiture. It was the sort of thing (and I say this without any derogatory intent) which might well win an amateur art competition in a large provincial town." *Amateur*? Yes. Right. What to do with the rest then? Blow it up. Portray a grisly image.

A Gallery of Portraits

Lives & Artists—By ROBERT MELVILLE

ERIC GILL'S BALDNESS was neatly covered by a beret. Malcolm Yorke, his latest biographer,[1] tells us that he wore a beret as a tribute to the human head. He did not wear trousers; his belted smock came to just below his knees in the photographs of him with two of his carvings, chosen by Yorke, who says the smock came down to his shins. Gill himself thought it an ideal garment for both sexes, so long as it covered the genitals. His underpants are showing below his smock in one of the photographs and are said to be made of red silk. He usually wore stockings to match, short enough to leave a strip of bare leg. He was shod in slipper-like shoes tied at the ankle, but Yorke says he wore boots as a tribute to the dignity of human feet. He looked a bit like a monk and a bit of a silly. His silliness was confirmed by much of his absurdly dogmatic writing. D. H. Lawrence complained that he was like "a tiresome uneducated workman 'argufying' in a pub", but he praised a couple of paragraphs in an article Gill wrote about slavery and freedom.

Gill admitted that his writing was dictatorial and "insufficiently precise", but an obvious characteristic of his other work was its precision: he used to say that a workman's bench should be as neat as an altar. The typefaces he designed were models of clarity and good taste. The lettering he carved in stone was crisp and elegant, and led him into carving figures in stone and wood, but although his sculpture usually shared the virtues of his lettering

[1] *Eric Gill: Man of Flesh and Spirit*. By MALCOLM YORKE. Constable, £12.50.

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it was rarely warmed by the imagination. An exception, illustrated by Yorke, is *Caryatid*, carved in 1927 out of a massive log of Wellingtonia pine. It retains the sense of massiveness and is quite free from medievalism or other Christian impedimenta. He had joined the Catholic Church in 1913 and his attempt to understand Thomism didn't do much for his sculpture. He probably gained a clearer knowledge of its concepts from Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism*, but he exaggerated the craft side: it might have been better for his work if he had paid more attention to the art of the two painters Maritain particularly admired, to the prostitutes and clowns of Rouault and the levitating Parisians of Chagall.

The decorative initial letters and printers' ornaments he made for limited editions were charming and ingenious, but there were lapses. For instance, he made for the Golden Cockerel Press edition of *The Four Gospels* (1931) some ambitious initial words entwined with figures. The word "Then" is busy with figures engaged in the usual activities associated with the Crucifixion, but they do not bear the slightest resemblance to Roman soldiery. They look like trapeze artists and are even less theologically meaningful than his assertion that *Lady Chatterley's Lover* "states the Catholic view of sex and marriage more clearly and with more enthusiasm than most of our text books."

Nevertheless, it comes as something of a shock to be told by Yorke that "capricious lusts of the flesh crept into all aspects of his life and work." He is said to have confessed to occasional visits to prostitutes when working away from home and to have had a short passionate extra-marital affair, but he had an understanding wife and their marriage was never in danger. The idea that lust entered into all aspects of his art is very puzzling; there are so few signs of it in the hundred or more reproductions which accompany the text. The blurb tells us that for the first time some of his erotic drawings have been included, and the only word for them in these times is: disappointing. There are several female nudes in the best of taste. The top half of a pair of lovers in a tight embrace is delightfully done but the legs look like cardboard cut-outs, and if they are supposed to be having intercourse standing up, it's interesting to learn that a larger version of it was intended for a sculpture to be called *Christ and his Church*.

ONE DAY LAST SUMMER, Arthur Moyse, art critic of the anarchist newspaper *Freedom*, telephoned to congratulate me on getting into *Private Eye*'s "Pseuds Corner", for a passsage of high praise on the Adrian Stokes retrospective at the

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Serpentine Gallery. Moyse took the sting out of the sneer by telling me that he had been trying to get into "Pseuds Corner" for years. It so happens that there is a delightful story about Stokes in Margaret Gardiner's warm account of her friendship with Barbara Hepworth.[2] At the time, he was living in a flat in the Adelphi and she was surprised on her visit to the room in which he wrote that it was dominated by an untidy pile which she described as a "twilit silt of books." He told her that he badly needed a rare book for his work and had been held up for months because it was always out, at the London Library. At last he begged the librarian to tell him the name of the borrower so that he could plead with him to return it. The librarian looked into the matter and told him, "a Mr Adrian Stokes has had that book out for the last two years."

Margaret Gardiner also quotes his review in a 1933 *Spectator* of an early exhibition of Barbara Hepworth's carvings. He had a great feeling for stone and was almost bound to admire them. He spoke of their "radiance and vital repose." They never lost these qualities, but sometimes looked rather blank. I try to forget that many years ago I wrote a friendly enough piece about her, but it treated an entire exhibition as an invasion from outer space. There was a nice reference to her work in D. M. Thomas's novel *Birthstone*: "I visited the Barbara Hepworth house and garden museum, and felt more moved by the rough blocks still waiting for her dead hands than by the smooth finished sculptures. The uncouth granite seemed to be saying, 'What's keeping her?' "

At their first meeting the two women shook hands and Margaret Gardiner was startled by the strength of Barbara Hepworth's grip. It seemed at variance with the general impression of delicacy she gave. They met frequently when they were in London, and when one of them was away they wrote to one another. They discussed dress, food, the daily chores, money and the lack of it, and above all "work", by which Barbara meant exclusively carving. "I'm not fit to live with unless I can do some work", she said, and returned to the subject again and again. Carving could be exhausting but she claimed that it was nourishing work in a more durable way than any other activity. They were both careful to refrain from introducing the word "spiritual" into their discussion of Barbara's work. Bearing in mind their many political and social interests, I think they could be called "left-wing humanists."

Barbara had recently been separated from her first husband, John Skeaping, when they met, and she was disturbed by the effect of their parting on her son, Paul. He loved his mother but became unnaturally quiet in her presence. Ms Gardiner got to know him well for a short time when she was running a small nursery class and discovered that when he was not with his mother he was as noisy and obstreperous as the other children. When he was at home he was with his mother's charwoman rather more than he should have been and began to pick up her cockney accent. Barbara found herself continually correcting him, and one day when her sister was looking after Paul and he was marching round the room, blowing through a rolled-up newspaper, she said, "Are you being the Pied Piper, Paul?" and he answered, "You mustn't say piper, you have to say *paper*!" When Paul was nine his mother gave him the opportunity of deciding which of his parents he would prefer to live with and he chose his father. Like his father, he was in his element in the company of horses and dogs. When he visited his mother he was always very charming, but she told Ms Gardiner that he had no feeling for sculpture and did not want to look at her work.

When Barbara introduced Ms Gardiner to Ben Nicholson she did not take to him at first, but the charm and elegance of his work helped her to shake off the feeling that he was a bit too sure of himself. All the same, I must resist telling any of her stories about him, or about Naum Gabo and other artist friends. Even the mildest stories seem to touch on their secret life. There are only 63 pages in her book and some of these are photographs (scattered through the book, so they always come as a surprise).

Towards the end of the book Margaret Gardiner gives us a long and fascinating account of the continuing argument Barbara had with J. D. Bernal (M.G.'s closest friend) about Communism. She had from time to time wondered if she should join the Communist Party, but felt she couldn't toe any party line, let alone the intransigent line Bernal had adopted which caused him to call her a political illiterate. It made her very angry, but I mention only one aspect of her argument, which seems to have arisen from Bernal's admiration for some new synthetic materials which might be useful for sculpture. She wrote to Ms Gardiner: "I put up a strong plea for 'live' material for sculpture as in my opinion the fault of the new materials is in their deadness of colour, weight, texture and temperature ... the average design in plastic is an anti-sculptural, hypocritical and smug abortion."

THE COVER of the book in which Edward Burra is remembered by some of his friends[3] reproduces his charming, wonderfully English, long horizontal composition featuring the Sunday morning clientele of *The Agricultural Arms, Islington*; a

[2] *Barbara Hepworth: A Memoir*. By MARGARET GARDINER. Salamander Press, £6.00, paper £3.95.

[3] *Edward Burra: A Painter Remembered by his Friends*. Edited by WILLIAM CHAPPELL. André Deutsch, £8.95.

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brightly dressed, middle-class crowd, some holding shorts, others with hands round pint mugs, ignoring handles when there are any. It is a sign that it's a late painting that several of the figures are so insubstantial that other figures pass through them. "Why are you painting transparent people?" asked William Chappell, who has done an excellent job of editing. "Well", replied Burra, "don't you find as you get older you start seeing through everything?"

Although his late paintings were executed in thin washes and in his early paintings the watercolour was so solid that it looked like oil, the subject-matter of *The Agricultural Arms* was quite close in spirit to the scenes in brothels, sailors' cafés and night-clubs in Southern France which he painted in the late Twenties and early Thirties. Two of them were in the collection of Arthur Jeffress and I got to know them very well. One looked as if it might be a snide and amusing account of the Dolly Sisters. The other was a painting of two brutal-looking French sailors sitting in front of a hatstand on which several sailors' hats were hanging, and it conveyed the sense of a loud hum of conversation. It was beautifully drawn and painted and over the years I became very fond of it. The two sailors looked as if they belonged to what is known as the rough trade. Burra needed a strong element of actuality to bring out the sharpness and wit of his observation, and as an observer was thoroughly at home in the atmosphere of decadence in the late Twenties described by Chappell, to which Burra was introduced by the Corcorans. "Gerald Corcoran, young, tall, handsome and elegant, made a decorative addition to the crowd of writers, painters, poets, theatre people and those affluent enough to have no need to work.... The novelist of the time was Aldous Huxley, the newest playwright, Noël Coward, the most striking actress, Tallulah Bankhead. The Diaghilev Ballet was the rage. The drug was cocaine. The music jazz. The dances were the Charleston and the Black Bottom."

Burra was never able to be much more than an observer, his health was too delicate. He contracted arthritis at an early age and inherited from his pretty mother an abnormal blood condition. He was expected to die young, but it was a much-loved sister who died when she was twelve years old; Edward lived into his seventy-first year. His interest in disreputable neighbourhoods took him to Harlem when he visited America, and if he painted many Harlem scenes as good as the one in the Tate Gallery he probably deserves to be called by Mary Aiken, wife of the poet Conrad Aiken, "the best painter of the American scene." The Tate picture is the visual equivalent of a record by Fats Waller. But he was also an addict of horror fiction, and liked to paint pictures of fiends and cruel soldiery and monsters muffled in cloaks and peculiar versions of biblical subjects. I think they are supposed to frighten one or induce deep meditation, but they

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Marie-Françoise Allain

To make Graham Greene's real acquaintance it is necessary to look for him in his books. 'I think my books are my children,' he frankly concedes. In his autobiographical works, *A Sort of Life* and *Ways of Escape*, he does, it is true, lift a corner of the veil. But we have had to wait till the publication of these uninhibited, free-ranging conversations with the young French writer Marie-Françoise Allain to discover the hidden Greene. He discusses his childhood, his travels and encounters, the genesis of his novels and plays, his religion, his inner world, with a freedom and candour which overcome his habitual reticence.

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are always too decorative for that.

More horrifying than anything he himself created was a framed photograph which was hanging outside his studio door when John Rothenstein first visited him. He lived in his parents' house in Rye. His studio was upstairs and there were Victorian watercolours on the staircase wall. Then outside the door of the studio, Rothenstein was confronted by this photograph. It looked as if it was intended to turn visitors away. It was a close-up of a head half eaten away by leprosy. I wonder how long he kept it there. The very thought of it makes his fiends and other monsters move over into pantomime. As time went on he turned more and more to landscapes and flower-pieces and some of his vases of flowers were very stately. George Melly, in his foreword, says that he formed a late friendship with Francis Bacon, which is not really surprising. Stylistically, they are far apart, but like Stanley Spencer they are great English eccentrics, and all three deserve the description Samuel Palmer gave himself. They are crinkle-crankle goths.

GRAHAM SUTHERLAND WAS probably the most crinkle-crankle of them all, and Roger Berthoud was wise not to attempt a new assessment of his work; but he handles a great deal of biographical material in a very orderly and readable fashion.[4] The controversies that kept Sutherland's name in the news must have been well researched, and by not taking sides Berthoud gives a reasonably clear view of the personalities involved. No one emerges unscathed, but ironically enough Douglas Cooper—thought by many at the time to be making a bid for the Directorship of the Tate—came out of it as an arrogant man but a first-rate art historian. There is no doubt that if he had ever been the Director, the Tate would have many more fine pictures of the Paris School in its collection. I still dream that the reclining nude by Modigliani that was at the Lefevre, and the big interior by Matisse that was knocking about for months at the Redfern, belong to the nation.

It was fortunate for Sutherland that Cooper was pleased with the stand he took in the Tate affair. Cooper's book is likely to be the standard work on Sutherland for many years to come. Their friendship lasted for many years, but was brought to an abrupt end by Kathleen Sutherland's misreading of an attack on Cooper in a French magazine. Apparently an exhibition was being arranged at the Musée des Arts Decoratifs of 54 paintings of the first half of this century which would still be around in 150 years time. The choice was made by Cooper and the article listed some choices that would be criticised by other critics. "Beckmann, Delaunay, Boccioni, Schiele and above all, the Englishman Sutherland." The Sutherlands thought these were the names of artists who were being omitted, and Kathleen, who usually undertook Graham's less pleasant correspondence, wrote to Cooper. According to Berthoud, she said it was her sorrow that he was excluding Graham from the exhibition though Graham didn't care, as he was used to not having a real supporter. Most of the press cuttings she had seen said that he, Cooper, was an arrogant snob for having left out this one and that one and, above all, Sutherland. She signed off with love "from an outraged wife." She was hasty beyond belief and hopelessly in the wrong: the ultimate result was that—some time after March 1975—Cooper decided to sell 37 paintings, drawings and lithographs by Sutherland. They were exhibited at the Redfern Gallery and the show was a great success. The affectionate inscriptions on many of the works no doubt increased their desirability.

There were of course several other controversies of one sort or another, the most notorious being over the Churchill portrait with its ugly outcome. The general public knows him best for his portraits, and it's said that Prince Charles asked him if he ever painted anything else. I think his great contribution to English art will be his transformation of Pembrokeshire landscapes and his thorn trees and thorn heads.

RICHARD HAMILTON[5] TELLS an engaging story about five dustmen who were so curious about a painting they could see through his studio window that they asked if they could have a closer look, and when they were inside the studio they reverentially removed their hats. The painting is a portrait of Bing Crosby, and Hamilton has entitled it *I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas*. It was based on a negative frame from the Paramount film *Holiday Inn*. All the colours are in reverse, Bing's skin and shirt are black, his famous velour hat a dazzling white, but the black face leaves the likeness intact, and the sudden whiteness of the hat makes a curiously effective symbol of snow.

The Crosby portrait is one of the many reproductions he uses to illustrate his writing on painting, graphics, industrial design and photography, a lecture on various aspects of cinema which he calls "Glorious Technicolour, Breathtaking Cinemascope and Stereophonic Sound", and several papers on Marcel Duchamp, of whom he has made so thorough a study that he was invited to the United States to lecture on him at the Pasadena retrospective.

For an artist who was one of the leaders of the

[4] *Graham Sutherland: A Biography*. By ROGER BERTHOUD. Faber & Faber, £12.50.

[5] *Collected Words*. By RICHARD HAMILTON. Thames and Hudson, £12.50.

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Pop Art movement his images are often very subjective, and even after reading some of his explanations one wonders how the elements got together. The painting called *Aah!* is a case in point. It's based on a photograph of part of a car interior, showing dashboard and gear lever, and a gloved hand with one finger lightly touching the gear lever. "Every picture tells a story", says Hamilton, "in this case the velvet gloved finger of God energising the Isher weapon through the power glide lever: the Varaflame ejaculation being induced in confirmation of the Dichter dichtum." Hamilton has fortunately provided a glossary. An Isher weapon is a lethal weapon but not offensive: it exists only in Van Vogt's Scifi writing. Ernest Dichter PhD is/was motivation research consultant for Ronson. The flame of their Varaflame lighter is an expression of sexual activity. So everything is quite clear after all. The long *Aah!* is the noise of pleasure following the orgasm.

In the course of telling us how he arrived at the painting of Marilyn Monroe he has entitled *My Marilyn*, he says one or two interesting things about Marilyn herself. She insisted that publicity photographs be submitted to her for her approval or rejection, or sometimes even suggestions for retouching. He made his painting of two rows of these photographs, and it's evident that he was chiefly interested in the rejects. He calls the handmade marks "brutally and beautifully" in conflict with the bland quality of proofs and transparencies, and goes out of his way to preserve their aggressiveness. "The violent obliteration of her own image has a self-destructive implication that made her death all the more poignant", but since the cross is also a symbol of the Kiss he describes the action as "fortuitous narcissism."

I find it difficult to read his painting *Hommage à Chrysler Corp* although he has gone to a lot of trouble to name the ingredients. It is based on automobile ads in glossies: pieces are taken from Chrysler's Plymouth and Imperial, there is some General Motors material and a bit of Pontiac. I don't know enough about cars to say which is which, and I am not at all certain where the sexual symbols are (he mentions the Exquisite Form bra and the lips of Voluptua, star of an American late night TV show). I think what Peter Blake would call "the fine art bit" has taken the fragmentation a bit too far. I recognised "the bug-eyed monster" element because of the headlamps. A lot of people quite mistakenly thought the title was satirical, so he decided to have a go at satire in the hope of displaying the difference, and looked around for a suitable subject to hate.

He picked on Hugh Gaitskell, who was leader of the Labour opposition at the time and the chief obstacle to his party adopting an anti-nuclear policy. Hamilton considered this to be monstrous of Gaitskell, and had the idea of effecting a marriage

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between a news photograph of him and one of the faces used as a cover for a magazine called *Monsters of Filmland*. He had a lot of troubles before he hit on the right amalgam, but the end result was extremely effective. The newspaper photograph was not in the least flattering, and the blow-up he worked over didn't improve it. Not a good-looking man at the best of times, Gaitskell's unmistakable likeness had puffy cheeks, heavy pouches under the eyes, an unpleasantly pursed mouth and a double chin. The monster selected contributed a mask-like appearance which Hamilton improved on by cutting off the portrait half-way up the forehead. But more important is the use he made of a protruding eye-ball in the make-up of Jack the Ripper, or possibly of the eye like a glass marble in the otherwise chewed-up face of the portrait of Dorian Gray. Hamilton's title for this fearsome painting is *Portrait of Hugh Gaitskell as a Famous Monster of Filmland*. It's disquieting because the interferences play so small a part in this bug-eyed monster.

HIS SEMI-ABSTRACT "soft blue" and "soft pink" landscapes are not among his best things and they drew attention to themselves because he included in the foreground a somewhat larger than life-size roll of Andrex toilet-paper in the appropriate colour. The presence of the toilet roll drew attention to shapes which suggested giant turds and he had some difficulty in getting the Arts Council to exhibit them. They led to an amusing essay by him entitled "Romanticism." The series was based on Andrex ads in the colour supplements of the Sixties which launched their new colours, soft-blue and soft-pink. The whole ad was suffused by pink or blue, and represented two lightly clothed girls in a forest glade, in what he calls "equivocal" poses, caused by the presence of the toilet rolls; he has to illustrate a Mary Quant ad of a squatting girl to press home his point, but his remark about the Quant ad is acute enough: "The bland empty stare used by fashion models seems entirely appropriate to the squatting posture."

He discovered to his surprise, about eighteen years after he had found the Andrex girls in the woods so inspiring, that they had been conceived by Bridget Riley when she worked at the J. Walter Thompson agency. "Who would have thought", he says, "that the particular genius at work here was hers." He ends with another haunting vision, this time from Jung: "I saw before me the cathedral, the blue sky. God sits on his golden throne, high above the world—and from under the throne an enormous turd falls upon the sparkling new roof, shatters it, and breaks the walls of the cathedral asunder."

LUCIAN FREUD, like Balthus, has always kept a tight hold on the presentation of his pictures and seems very anxious to preserve his privacy. Both painters have denied us a biographical chronology. Lawrence Gowing has written the introduction to the first book on Freud to be published.[6] He once wrote a superb essay on Vermeer, and parts of his Freud piece are brilliant, but he becomes tortuous when Freud's private life is on his mind. In 1975 Freud painted a portrait of a young woman in which there was a great sadness in the eyes, and he entitled the picture *Last Portrait*. Image and title together brought Gowing's curiosity to boiling point. He asked a woman friend if she knew the girl. "She turned incredulously:—'Do you really not know?' " He said he didn't, and since he claims that he still does not know the girl's name I like to think that he clapped his hand over his friend's mouth just as she was going to utter it. He says that if he had managed to gratify his curiosity he would have cheated himself of the essence of that picture, and adds "that lovely masterpiece of love." He calls her the girl "with the heavy-lidded eyes" and he may well feel that it's a confirmation of his interpretation that he found five more of her images in the wrong date order.

Looking for them becomes an absorbing game: there are two paintings in the nude, another in brush and ink, a head-and-shoulders, and a strange and powerful painting called *Large Interior, Paddington* (1968-9), painted four or five years earlier than *Last Portrait*. Gowing's claim that the two paintings of the nude are "eloquent of the tension and the suspense of the night, as well as the abandonment", may well be true; there is a sense of ecstasy gradually seeping away. There is even one male nude (clutching a rat—not, I think for any symbolical reason: it must have been passing by) to which Gowing's description could apply. The drawing of the nude with heavy-lidded eyes has a similarly contorted pose to the two paintings but a totally different effect, because it has been created with a delightful linear invention composed of slender bundles of concentric and curvaceous lines; it is as if Klee had intended to take a new line for a walk but was held up and forgot about it, and Freud has picked it up and taken it for a quiet saunter through the highways and byways of the girl's nakedness.

It took me back immediately to the early pages of the book, which celebrate the time when his paintings wonderfully demonstrated the probity of drawing and caused Herbert Read to wonder if Lucian Freud should be called the Ingres of Existentialism. The ones I like best of all are a series of portraits in various media, executed in the late 1940s, of the girl Gowing calls the wide-eyed girl. He rightly says of all but the last one that they "build up an image as unforgettable as a myth." There is a blemish on her right hand, but it is no blemish until he paints the last portrait, when one wonders whether it was a

[6] *Lucian Freud*. By LAWRENCE GOWING. Thames and Hudson, £18.00.

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birthmark or a burn. Before, she was so beautiful and the artist so dazzled, so determined to place her out of reach, that the mark was the sign of a goddess. It is not the first of his last portraits nor the last, but it's the cruellest and coldest, a spiteful portrait of a profoundly unhappy woman. It's in the Tate Gallery for all to see. It is even more obviously a last portrait than the portrait that bears that title.

She was his first wife, but her name was never in the titles. "The name is no one's business", says Gowing, "nothing to do with the pictures." Several years later, Gowing met her at a dinner party, recognising her instantly from the portraits. It would have been very surprising if he hadn't: not only is she strikingly beautiful, it's not likely that any other girl's face has ever been subjected to a more intense scrutiny. He told her that he had written about Freud and tells us that he caught her interest immediately. It was clear to him that Freud's images of her were still in the forefront of her mind. Gowing now feels free to use her Christian name. It's Kitty this and Kitty that and "in the Kitty pictures." He must have known all along that she was Kitty Epstein, daughter of the sculptor.

1951, the year in which Freud began to paint the last portrait of Kitty, marked the beginning of a new phase in his work. It was a kind of magic realism, especially in the small portrait head of Francis Bacon, in which the sitter looked as if he had just arisen from sleep feeling half dead. He had become scornful of "*la belle peinture*", but quickly realised that brilliantly painted shabby interiors and unhappy faces were not the best ways to express his scorn. His delicate touch remained, and people were prepared to forgive him his subjects, as long as the paint itself remained exquisite. The paint itself had to be as intransigent as the subject matter. This was done by changing his brushes from sable to hog. The paint became much more substantial, and at its best his vision assumed an exalted callousness.

IT TOOK ME a long time to come to terms with the painterly mode in which he has been working for twenty years or more. I became interested when I saw *Large Interior, Paddington*, finished in 1969. It looks like a story-telling picture, and one tends to forget the heavy opaque painting while fumbling after a meaning. If the date is correct, it was the first picture in which the girl with heavy-lidded eyes appeared. She is lying on a narrow bed against the back wall of a bare room. She is naked and her legs are covered by a blanket; her knees are raised because the bed is too short for her. It would be easy not to recognise her because her eyes are wide-open and her usual look of sorrow has been replaced either by rapture or hysteria. The artist's mother is sitting in the foreground in an easy chair, and beside her chair, conspicuous and incongruous, is a

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mortar and pestle containing a grey substance. In a way this pestle and mortar are more incongruous than the leg of mutton in Stanley Spencer's double portrait of himself and his wife. Gowing's explanation of this fascinating picture is interesting but far-fetched. The mortar represents the technical resources of Mrs Freud's son, "laid at her feet for her to reflect on", and the girl "is possessed by visionary idealism. In fantasy, at least, she had been admitted to the communion of mother and son. . . . A visionary experience of sexuality is being shared. . . ."

It was not until he started to use thick paint that he became concerned with the female nude. But his unclothed figures are really too naked to be called nudes. He has turned nakedness into a new frisson. Yet there is no attempt to imitate flesh. One doesn't forget for a moment that he is creating these figures with paint. He himself says, ". . . as far as I am concerned, the paint *is* the person. I want it to work for me just as flesh does."

The first masterpiece is *Naked Girl*, 1966 (colour plate 122 here). She is on her back and we see her from above. Her thigh bones and ribs press against her skin. She is not at her best, but she is more hauntingly beautiful because of it. Her hands are clenched and up by her shoulders. Her eyes are half-closed, but she watches. She is apprehensive but prepared for love. Freud is the best painter of the naked figure our country has ever had.

Ripples in the Pond

On Geoffrey Grigson—By ALAN BROWNJOHN

THIS IS a large allocation of a writer's work to arrive in a single parcel, and one would think from the touchy or haughty noises issuing from places where (as so very often) Geoffrey Grigson has given offence, that it might be a lacerating, or at best a grinding, task to read through it. Can't even Grigson's victims be a little less grudging? These three substantial books[1] burst with a rare combination of enthusiasm, annoyance—and sheer readability. All animadversions about the well-known harshness of Grigson's criticism, undiminished since the days of his *New Verse* magazine in the 1930s and now sustained into his own late seventies, ought to be balanced by some recognition of the infectious generosity of his sympathies (except, of course, in the present; but we will take the flip side later).

Separate the passionately enthusiastic Grigson from the determinedly abrasive, and you have a harvest of essays and poems which strip away the grime of ignorance, indifference or misunderstanding from obscured reputations, so that they shine out like finely-cleaned paintings: Thomas Campion, Ivor Gurney, William Morris, Christina Rossetti, or just the single excellent poems ("poems" are always more important than "poets") which known, or unknown, writers have produced in a moment of "possession", in "a sudden strength of a particular apprehension or perception." The stand Grigson invariably takes is on particularity, suddenness, alertness. If you fail to recognise the wonderful pressure of the ordinary on those who perceive it most vividly (and "wonderful" is a word he would want to restore), or if you travesty it, then you fail indeed.

Grigson once advised children to use the margins of their books for writing comments in—that was why they were provided. And so one reads the notebook entries in *The Private Art* and the reprinted reviews and articles in *Blessings, Kicks and Curses* nodding agreement, ticking, bracketing, telling oneself (which is unlikely) that one might have noticed, without Grigson's nudging, what he isolates for praise in an odd passage of Lovelace, or warns about in the musical settings of famous lyrics, or highlights in a little-known poem by Thomas Hood.

Nodding agreement, too, with Grigson on Edith Sitwell (once again; and how right he is about her snobbish and spiteful autobiography), and in his respect for the poems of John Crowe Ransom, and shouting with laughter at what follows that deceptively mild start to his review of *In Bluebeard's Castle*: "I propose to say some unfriendly things about George Steiner's book. . . ." And then. . . . And then, nods of assent are interrupted by slight, and then greater, shakings of the head, not just in disagreement, but in a kind of despair. Despair because the flip side of the illuminating care and "charitableness" with which he reads poetry for what the rest of us have failed to see, is a blind and bitter exasperation with what falls below his standards.

It is as if he cannot forbear to be angry about "the worst" when it receives acclaim from others whose

[1] *The Private Art: A Poetry Notebook. Blessings, Kicks and Curses: A Critical Collection. Collected Poems 1963–1980.* By GEOFFREY GRIGSON. Allison & Busby, £9.95 each.

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judgments might appear to weaken his own deeply informed and genuinely generous estimates of "the best." W. H. Auden once wrote, in a poem, that those who disliked Bellini had the good manners not to be born. Grigson might apply the same to those who dare to admire Emily Dickinson ("arch"), Dylan Thomas ("taken over by an agglutination of familiar Victorian verse"), Philip Larkin ("clichés of the moment"), and Robert Lowell ("an appendix to the real thing"). It is possible to reflect that if one enjoys a polemical critic one should be prepared to take the rough with the rough. And yet (Grigson inveighs against the reviewer who hedges his bets with the words "And yet . . .", but they have to be wheeled reluctantly into use)—and yet it will not do. The terse dismissals, the unsubstantiated sideswipes (from a critic who tells others to quote poems, not generalise), the crude scatological contempt—they sort badly with the enthralling moments of vision he experiences, and registers, about what he enjoys.

It will not do because it can seem to undermine those moments: it becomes harder to convince Smith that William Barnes is good if Smith has noticed, say, Grigson's brusque treatment of Wallace Stevens. And it will not do because it begins to make a vitally important area of concern look like a tiny, defiant outpost. The matter at issue throughout Grigson's work is really nothing less than the crucial importance of being able to translate the world of the senses adequately into words, so that the world at large might be better apprehended by others, and enhanced for them. Grigson writes about it eloquently and simply in *The Private Art*, when he cites "the best image of love I have come across", in poems by the great Japanese poet Hitamaro:

> "In one poem . . . about having to leave his wife behind, he speaks of her clinging to him by his side and swaying like seaweed in the rise and fall of the sea. . . . Poetry improves the things of life. I experience seaweed now, the brown wracks on the returning tide, in the image of Hitamaro, writing thirteen hundred years ago and a great way off, in a long dead civilization."

Is there another poet now writing who could argue the necessity of poetry so movingly, with so little pretentiousness? And who would support the argument so meticulously in that faintly awkward yet oddly delicate manner he employs in poems like "Angles and Circles"?

> *I do not decline that cress*
> *May be pure and green on*
> *Water running over red quartz,*
>
> *That fine sand may be printed*
> *Delicately by birds of the tide*
> *Fringes there a minute ago. . . .*

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Grigson believes that "the maker of poems has more sensual and intellectual advantages and possibilities and resources than artists of any other kind." And yet he gives this battle to maintain the importance of words properly used—as against, for example, the smoothness of "stainless steel and formica"—the air of a minor encounter fought out in some almost wholly ignorable corner of human affairs.

ON THE STRENGTH OF its persistence so far, and supported by Whistler, who said "There never was an artistic period. There never was an Art-loving nation", Grigson hopes that poetry will persist and flourish in defiance of "inadequacies, difficulties and dooms."

> "If most people read newspapers and not poems, as Yeats complained, I comfort myself by thinking of the ripple caused by throwing a small stone into a large pond. On the shore of the pond the ripple is felt, without knowledge of the pebble, by whatever creatures may live there."

It is quite possible to assent to the felicity of this image of poetry while still feeling that there was something right and decent in what Yeats (no democrat) was saying. A little later Grigson even appears to concede part of the argument that things do get worse:

> "What we are setting all around ourselves in this age does reduce the images which can be well used in poetry—the images from nature or the images from the blending of nature and artifice.... *Bypass, flyover, pavement, lay-by, traffic lights, motorway, roundabout*—even *bridge*—are emptier than *ford* used to be. We face abstraction, poverty, difficulty."

But this is to concede also the marginality, the irrelevance, of poetry in an age of journalism, of "the company chairman, and the Foreign Minister and the editor and the union boss and the detective inspector and the engineer."

Enumerate the formidable forces of the opposition in this way and you state the case for some sort of crusade. "No poetry, in whatever future convention, would mean no humanity", Grigson writes. True, one nods. But the Grigsonian crusade against this state of affairs is one which allows its own formidable forces to be smoothly manoeuvred aside into a terrain marked "Permitted Eccentricity." In his *jeu d'esprit* fable of 1957, entitled "Apartheid, or in a Class Apart", he predicts that the intellectuals, tamed by their own compromises, neutered by their acquiescence in the decline in "the standards of authorship and intellect", will finally be corralled in the "Kierkegaard Pueblo, Adlestrop, in the Cotswold Reservation", doing no harm to the outside world, possessing no relevance to it. Since then, the kind of cultural argument which this satire embodies, an argument which Grigson and F. R. Leavis both (albeit with mutual dislike) deployed in their different ways, has been corralled, and defused, in the same way.

Writing about Auden's discovery of Ivor Gurney exploring those same Cotswolds (in *A Certain World*), Grigson in 1974 praises his response to "our primary world":

> "If we follow him [Auden] round, as he celebrates, investigates, discards, adds, re-attempts, we find in him, I declare, explicit recipes for being human. And implicit ones, in poems, stanzas, lines, again and again, which give us in sonority and movement the additional bonus of what their language cannot say—the bonus of great poetry."

This is part of that warmly affirmative side of Grigson's criticism and poetry—his own "recipes for being human"—which makes his sad retreat from the wider struggle with the "dead throats, dead pairs of hands, dead pairs of feet" on the TV screens all the sadder. Occasionally—in 1977 it is from a consideration of a new book on William Blake (and it was Blake, ironically, who often

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brought the elderly Leavis back to the same position)—he will take up the cudgels:

> "I am not expecting virtue to oust vice—or whatever else we may call it, such as genial or cynical mediocrity. I don't expect virtue to take charge of everything that may affect our values. I am only thinking, though, that ineluctable vice must be encouraged, cajoled, kicked, somehow, into paying at least its traditional respect to virtue."

And here we come, ineluctably, it seems to me, to the poor old Arts Council, and all similar agencies, which are naively thought by some to exist to carry out the encouragement, cajoling and kicking, in the world of the company chairman, the union boss and the engineer.

The Arts Council gets the worst of it from Grigson. It represents a mediocre catering for something nearly obscene called "art-appetite": ". . . universal art-eating is organised and underwritten by the Arts Council." Grigson has not needed the Arts Council, and neither should others. But he might have paused, at least, to take a little further the argument implicit in the following:

> . . . I noticed that my three volumes of collected Crabbe, Cambridge Classics, 1905, still in their grey jackets, were priced by their publishers at 10s 6d a volume. Not bad—10s 6d a volume, 31s 6d for 1,617 pages. . . if a complete Crabbe had cost as much as £12.50, when I was twenty-six and earning £600 a year, it might have been, and probably would have been, a long time before this reader became a devotee of Crabbe and made deep expeditions into Crabbe, past Peter Grimes to the bean-sheaf which 'slowly blackened in the sickly sun', and on to that delineation, in a late disregarded tale, of the dying English year, when all is
>
> *silent in the scene around—*
> *All, save the distant sea's uncertain sound,*
> *Or here and there the gun, whose loud report,*
> *Proclaims to man that Death is but his sport.*

It was a boast of one Minister for the Arts (another despised breed for Grigson) that she had made the cheapest tickets for the opera cheaper than the tickets for West End cinemas. In a better world, books might be treated in the same spirit, and—overcoming with a few kicks and cajoleries the trade's deep-rooted abhorrence of making them available to purchasers—priced and distributed, with Arts Council help, at a level where a future Grigson might be able to find, and afford to buy, his complete Crabbe, or Chatterton, or Campion. But it has badly needed people with the wisdom, authority and bad temper of Grigson to say so. It would be nice to feel as optimistic as he does about the ultimate imperishability and the continuing importance of poetry, even for the few to whom (by the logic of all his scattered references to the topic) he is content to confine it. But one can't.

HIS AUTHORITY resides, of course, in the poems, and the new *Collected* indispensably recovers the verse which has gone into print and passed out of it in several slim volumes since the previous collected edition in 1963. It's a culling, but a light culling, from what must be a crop of approaching some 400 poems in these last twenty years. In 1978 the critic Samuel Hynes wrote perceptively about Grigson falling into the class of "habitual" poets: Clare, Hardy, Frost, they are among Grigson's enthusiasms and he joins their tradition. It was the tradition of poets who write verse as a kind of "self-sustenance", celebrating "the dailiness of existence" because they cannot stop doing so. Hynes argued that they were "painterly", rather than "nature" poems, and that the presence of any other person was rarely felt. I am not sure I agree: touch and smell ("Peculiar the scent of wood anemones, / they smell like sweat of aetuous women") enter into Grigson's dealings with nature as much as any ordering and rearranging he performs with a painter's vision. And he passes

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from nature quite rapidly back to the human, the satirical, and the erudite.

The poems in this edition in fact divide, as Grigson's poems always have, into at least four categories, making him a more diverse and unexpected poet than he is given credit for. These are the personal ones, the poems of (usually minute and infallible) observation, the satires, and the historical and anecdotal pieces. Grigson as a "personal" poet is a strangely vulnerable, gentle figure, a long distance from the asperities about the literary and other outrages which seem to him to threaten his own world of honest intimacy with the ordinary, as—in a most memorable phrase—"a guest of living." Take "Quelle Histoire", about Bertin remembering his "loved first girl" on his death-bed, a thought preceded by Grigson's own reflections on mortality:

Light noises from slight birds
In trees which have not leaves,
And through white sunshine waftings
Of now warmer, warmer air. Each

Season I arrive it seems that dying
Momentarily recedes. The mercury
Stays up. . . .

He means "arriving in France", but—to read Grigson as Grigson might someone else—the words as they stand offer a wider, more poignant suggestion of spring and renewal. He relates obliquely to the other people in his poems—the loved one by his side as he cuts a fruit in half, or coming (Hardy-fashion, but in a jauntier context here) out of the past into the present, as in "Grotto, and Recollection".

I swam from you through the grotto, it was not cold,
Under its black roof to the far rock, wrote
On the rock treading water your initial with
One finger,
Swam back to you: your small
Stiff nipples
I remember.

BUT HE ALSO relates to people surely, and tenderly. The forced, or routine, gesture is entirely absent from the poet who can write, "In poems everything, anything, that works, or helps the poem to work, is permissible."

What helps so many Grigson poems to work is an honesty to the moment which he will permit to become faltering, clumsy, even graceless (and he is no smooth technician) rather than falsify the experience. His poems of observation are full of it, and "Another June" provides an epigraph for his practice:

What we suppose repetitive may
Set us yawning.

But what else than Now is deity,
And worth adoring?

He asks us—constantly—to stop, and watch carefully, and appreciate a perception at sunrise:

Briefly most ordinary
Insects are fireflies
("Occasion")

or the "Death of a Farmyard":

Staddles, no, did
Not keep out rats. String-
Tailed quick feet, rats nipped

Into sacks. And believe it or not,
Two geese were dead and were dry,
Sitting down white around hollow,
Alongside low sties collapsed.

or (awkwardly and yet sharply) "Lovers in a Train":

Tresses—I pick that antique
winding word—fairly across her blackest

Eyebrows sway, her sweet head nested under
now her tender savage's unlobed and stark
most startling red-tinted ear.

And we must note, too, the evanescence of all such phenomena, the essence which disappears even as the effect is created:

Of the moon only a dull
Speck of orange I see now.
And in the course of these
Twelve words occurring
This speck of moon has gone
And a meteorite has
Straight downwards fallen.
("Items of a Night")

It would be good to be able to say that Grigson's satires and his anecdotes are as lethal or as absorbing as they respectively are where they occur in his notebook or his critical articles. But they are not. They are too often either beside the point (a heavy box on the ears for an undeserving National Trust), or too savage to win even the minimal sympathy required ("Birth of Criticism"), or unusually amiable: "Various Pakenhams/Thick as rooks/Now bring out/Their autumn books ("Metre of Recent Living"). But that passage is

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only a few lines on from some lines which suddenly combine the alert, the mischievous and the clumsy Grigson in little:

Now summer's come,
We flea the cat
Upon the page which
Features Levin.

Aimless cabbage-
whites arrive,
The founder's silly
Lecture's given.

The combination seems to be inseparable and we ought to be thankful for its presence on a jaded literary scene.

Less than Sixpence

Now let us educate you, let us, let us . . .
Cracking the crust, this rare politico's
A brave one, a home-baked
Brilliant blackbird, beaked
And gaping far beyond his pastry—
Listen to the facts, now, listen to me . . .
God save the Queen in her parlour,
God save the Counting House forever
And the silver spoon, the gold plate
And all those words which are good enough to eat.
Nobody loves Peace more than he does,
Of course, but he'd peck off any nose
To spite her face, poor maid
Alone in the garden with nowhere to hide
When the world ends. It's the *balance*
She doesn't understand, the courtly dance
Of money and power. *Oh listen, listen . . .*
If only she'd hang out reason
With the clothes. Things are not simple;
They are history's manifold example.
You can't just wash them and hope.
Oh keep faith with the faith we keep.
If not for you, for the sake of your children.
Of course we hope it will never happen.
That little white shirt on the line
Which waves at the future, take it in, take it in,
It signals surrender. The skull and bones
Could not be more fatal. *So we come into your homes*
Tonight and tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow
Telling you why and when and how
Until you understand. We have baked the pie
And now you'll eat it. Your destiny
Must be to go on listening to reason, its song
Of so much less than sixpence . . .
But no, this is wrong, wrong.
Switch off, walk out in the garden, there's time yet
To hang out a whole wardrobe. Why not?
And remember, a pocket-full of rye is something.
Plant each grain of it, then let the blackbirds sing.

John Mole

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CHRONICLE

Prague's Cruel Spring

Masaryk, 1948—By RICHARD MAYNE

JAN MASARYK enlivened any gathering. Well over six feet tall, he was burly and ebullient: he had a boisterous laugh and dark, brooding, humorous brown eyes. Despite his bulk he was small-boned, with a pianist's supple hands and a light step. He moved quickly, like his mercurial moods. English and American acquaintances marvelled at his command of their language; but his warmth and gusto were exotic. "At luncheon," one lifelong friend remarked of their first meeting, "he had been gay, ribald, and in language and manner ultra-American. At the piano he was a Slav of Slavs." His face, with his domed bald head, could look grave and reflective—then crumple into self-mockery, the left eyelid drooping, a rueful smile merging with the frank, comfortable double chin.

He had begun life as the scapegrace son of a great man: Tómaš Masaryk, the austere, white-bearded professor of philosophy who from the 1890s onwards fought to free the Czechs and Slovaks and other subject races from the grip of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. After World War I, Tómaš Masaryk was to become founder-President of the new Republic of Czechoslovakia; but his own father had been a Slovak coachman on an estate in Moravia, and for many years a Habsburg serf. Jan Masaryk liked to picture his grandfather as a roistering rough diamond, fond of a dram of plum vodka: he himself, his friends noted, served "dreadful slivovice and vermouth cocktails." As a child, he was regularly beaten for rebellious escapades; but he worshipped his father, and perhaps despaired of living up to him. In his presence, he would fall silent, listening attentively, full of admiration and affection. He never finished his university studies, in Prague and Vienna, but begged to be allowed to travel: he wanted to see his mother's native country, the United States. At length he set sail, aged eighteen, with as much money in his pocket as the family could then afford: it was less than a hundred dollars.

He spent nearly ten years away, in New York, Bridgeport, Chicago, and elsewhere; but he refused to batten on his mother's relatives, and worked at a variety of jobs—as a messenger, a clerk, a factory hand, and even a pianist in cinemas and dance-halls. Afterwards, characteristically, he made light of his adventures. He had liked gambling and girls, he said: but he had also taught English to illiterate immigrant workmates. Finally, on the eve of World War I, he returned to Prague. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was soon to crumble, but for the time being it was still intact; and Masaryk was conscripted into the Imperial Army—perhaps as surety for his father, who had now become an active dissident, siding with Britain, France, and the other Allies against Austro-Hungary and Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany. In December 1914, old Tómaš Masaryk slipped out of the country and made his way to unhappy exile in London. "There was a report in the American papers," he wrote later, "that our Jan, serving in the Austrian army, had been, or was to be, hanged on my account." In fact, Jan had been posted to the Polish front. He claimed afterwards that he had never had to fire a shot. All he had done, he said, was acquire some colourful army language and a fund of stories worthy of his compatriot and contemporary Jaroslav Hašek, creator of that arch-scrimshanker, *The Good Soldier Švejk*.

NOT UNTIL THE END OF World War I was the Masaryk family at last reunited—this time no longer in their dark, cramped, unfashionable Prague apartment, but in the new President's quarters in Hradčany Castle, the fortified palace of the Bohemian kings.

Jan Masaryk was now past thirty—long overdue for an orthodox career. There was no shortage of openings: he was even offered a princely salary to head the Škoda works. But, as he said afterwards, "I felt, you know, that Masaryk's son ought not to make instruments of war but instruments of peace, and that is why I became a diplomatist." In 1919, he joined the Czechoslovak delegation to the Paris Peace Conference, serving as assistant to the 35-year-old Foreign Minister Edvard Beneš. He spent a further year as Chargé d'Affaires in Washington, then returned for two years to the Foreign Ministry

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in Prague. His next post was London. While Counsellor to the Czechoslovak Legation there, he contracted a short-lived, childless marriage to the daughter of one of his father's American friends.

In 1925, at the age of 39, Jan Masaryk became his country's Minister in London, and for thirteen years made the Legation in Grosvenor Square a focal point of social and diplomatic life. Envious colleagues complained of nepotism: borrowing a title from the dramatist J. M. Synge, they nicknamed Masaryk "The Playboy of the Western World." But part of his job was precisely to bring his nation to the notice of Westminster, Whitehall, and Number Ten, Downing Street. "I spend most of my official time in there," he said, "explaining to the gentlemen inside that Czechoslovakia is a country and not a contagious disease."

It was a necessary task. Britain seemed dangerously inattentive to the trouble that was brewing for Czechoslovakia and Europe. For several years, there had been unrest among the German-speaking inhabitants of Northern Bohemia, the Sudetenland. This region, highly industrialised, was also the site of Czechoslovakia's main military defences. It lay on the Czech side of the mountains which formed the natural, strategic, and legal frontier with Germany. Its people had never been Germans, but citizens of Austro-Hungary. To Austrian-born Adolf Hitler, of course, this was a distinction without a difference. From 1935 onwards, to exploit and foster discontent, the Foreign Ministry in Berlin secretly paid 15,000 marks a month to Konrad Henlein, leader of the Nazi Sudeten German Party. When Henlein visited Jan Masaryk at the Czechoslovak Legation in London, he came with an *SS* man. "My friend here accompanies me wherever I go," he explained. Masaryk opened the door into his drawing-room and whistled for his Aberdeen terrier. "My friend here," he said, "accompanies *me* wherever I go."

Henlein seemed amused. The *SS* man was not—perhaps because he, in fact, was Henlein's master. For Hitler, Henlein was a puppet, and troubles in the Sudetenland were merely a pretext for annexing it. During the summer of 1938, Hitler's demands brought the quarrel to a crisis and a threat of war. In September, after agitated solo missions to Berchtesgaden and Bad Godesberg, the British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain agreed with his French counterpart Edouard Daladier to meet both Hitler and Mussolini in Munich. There, on 29–30 September, with no representatives of Czechoslovakia present, Chamberlain and Daladier gave in to Hitler's threats. They handed over 10,000 square miles of the Czech Sudetenland to Nazi Germany, 5,000 square miles of Southern Slovakia to Hungary, and a smaller area in Silesia to Poland. Later apologists argued that they had thereby gained time to improve their military defences: but so had Hitler. What really swung the decision was insularity and a panic fear of war.

> "How horrible, fantastic, incredible it is [said Chamberlain in a broadcast before going to Munich] that we should be digging trenches and trying on gas-masks here because of a quarrel in a far-away country between people of whom we know nothing!"

When Chamberlain returned from Munich proclaiming "peace for our time . . . peace with honour," Jan Masaryk was present to hear the House of Commons go wild with joy. Perhaps fortunately, Tómaš Masaryk had died a year earlier, on 14 September, his son's fifty-first birthday. Long before, in ailing health, he had passed the Presidency to Edvard Beneš—small, dapper, and rather didactic, a man sharply but not unfairly described by David Lloyd George as "impulsive, clever, but much less sagacious and more short-sighted than Tómaš Masaryk." The old President had the measure of Beneš. On his deathbed he had told his son: "Very bad times are coming for the nation . . . and for Europe. Beneš will have to bear the brunt of it. He is not equal to it alone. He is not big enough. You must help Beneš. You know much of the world better than he does. Stand by Beneš always. Promise me that you will never leave him alone." Jan Masaryk had given his word. Now, with the frenzied, shameful cheers of the House of Commons still ringing in his head, he went to see Chamberlain and the Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax. His words to them might have been his father's. "If you have sacrificed my nation to preserve the peace of the world, I will be the first to applaud you. But if not, gentlemen, God help your souls."

THE MUNICH AGREEMENT merely postponed World War II. On 1 October 1938, Hitler's troops marched into the Sudetenland. President Beneš mobilised the Czechoslavak army, but stood it down again under pressure from Britain and France. He then went into exile, and Jan Masaryk resigned. But this was only the beginning. Later, Hitler told his generals: "It was clear to me from the first moment that I could not be satisfied with the Sudeten territory. That was only a partial solution." Within six months, he had occupied Prague itself, and the Nazis' swastika flag was flying from Hradčany Castle, where Hitler spent the night of 15 March 1939, in the apartment that had once been Tómaš Masaryk's. He turned the Czech half of the country into a Nazi "protectorate", effectively swallowed up in the Third Reich; the Slovak half became his first "satellite" state. A further six months later, all Europe was at war.

That war, a Czechoslovak poet wrote, was like "broken glass in our arteries and our blood." The country itself was drained by the Nazis: loot and

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other losses amounted to some 14,000 million dollars in six years. Between March 1939 and May 1945, 350,000 Czechs and Slovaks were deported to concentration camps: only 100,000 of them came back. The Czechoslovak underground movement *Obrana Naroda*, "Defence of the Nation", was probably the biggest resistance network of the whole War—although in clandestine operations size and security seldom go together: some 38,000 partisans were killed by the Gestapo. The best-known instance of Nazi brutality was the destruction of Lidice, one of two villages razed to the ground, with the murder of 2,000 hostages, in revenge for the death of Reinhard Heydrich, the ruthless *Reichsprotektor*, mortally wounded on 27 May 1942, by three Czechoslovak patriots parachuted in from the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in London. These three—who were betrayed, and who killed themselves after a losing gun-battle with the *SS*—were not the only Czechoslovak exiles who fought an heroic war. General Ludvík Svoboda, a regular soldier who escaped through Poland to the Soviet Union, became commander of a Czechoslovak Army Corps attached to the Red Army. In the West, Czechoslovak pilots and aircrew flew in special squadrons of the British Royal Air Force. And a few hours before Hitler had entered Prague, the effective head of the Czechoslovak military intelligence service, with help from MI6, had flown through a blizzard to London with ten of his staff and all his essential files.

AFTER THE DÉBÂCLE of Munich, both Beneš and Jan Masaryk had gone to the United States—Masaryk on a lecture tour, Beneš to teach at the University of Chicago. Now, they both returned to Britain. Beneš took a country house at Ashton Abbots in Buckinghamshire. Masaryk, who preferred to be nearer the centre, rented a small apartment in Westminster. On 8 September 1939, he began a series of radio talks to Czechoslovakia. One commentator thought that these made him, "with the single exception of Winston Churchill, the most effective Allied broadcaster of the war." To his listeners, who risked death when tuning to the BBC, he became known as "*naš Honza*"—"our Johnny." Despite the Munich agreement, he was still a firm Anglophile: he wanted nothing better for the world, he said, "than that all countries should have the same qualities as these islands of Britain." Describing the calm of Londoners under nightly air attack, he declared: "The British people know anxiety; they do not know what fear is." Asked what his War aims were, he answered: "The right of Jew and Gentile to read *Das Kapital* and *Mein Kampf* in Prague streetcars—every citizen must have the right to shout in the streets 'I don't like my Prime Minister.' Or, simply: 'I want to go home.' "

Home, for Masaryk, was still 600 miles away; but in preparation for their eventual return to Prague, he and Beneš and other exiled members of the former Government and Parliament set up in London a Czechoslovak National Committee, and lobbied hard to secure its recognition by the Allies. They had no luck while Lord Halifax remained Foreign Secretary; but at the end of 1940 he was replaced by Anthony Eden, and on 18 July 1941, Britain officially recognised the Czechoslovak Provisional Government-in-Exile, with Beneš as its President and Masaryk as Foreign Minister. It took a further year to persuade the British Government formally to repudiate the Munich agreement.

Meanwhile, Beneš and Masaryk had to reckon with potential rivals. At and around the time of Munich, a number of leading Czechoslovak Communists had also fled the country. Two of them had come to London: Dr Vladimír Clementis, a smooth, clever, podgy, rather amiable lawyer, and Václav Nosek, a tall, bony former miner and steelworker. Most of the others had sought refuge in Moscow, where they had set up their own shadow Cabinet under Klement Gottwald, a Catholic of Austrian origin who had become General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party long before the War. One American visitor, the writer and journalist John Gunther, described Gottwald as "a short man, pleasant-looking, taciturn, and conventional in exterior, even to the item that he smokes a pipe." In fact, he was a hard-liner as well as a hard drinker. "He has 'a stubborn untrained mind'," Gunther added, "and so is hard to argue with."

Difficult as agreement might prove, Beneš believed that it was possible and essential to bring together both groups of Czechoslovak exiles. In late 1943, he went to Moscow to negotiate a Treaty of Friendship with the USSR. Welcomed with full honours as a Head of State, he professed himself delighted. The Treaty of Friendship promised "mutual respect of sovereignty and non-interference in internal affairs." Beneš cabled to Masaryk:

> "I did not expect such prospects of cordial and harmonious co-operation. . . . I regard it as certain that all treaties not only with us but also with the British and Americans will be kept."

Jan Masaryk was less sanguine. In the words of his friend Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart,

> "He recognized the necessity of an understanding with the Soviet Union. On more than one occasion he said to me—in rather coarse language—that he would rather go to bed with Stalin than kiss Hitler's behind. On the other hand he was instinctively suspicious. . . . As a defender of small nations he could not find any sign of liberty, equality and fraternity in the Commu-

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nist dictionary. 'For me Russia after the revolution remains the same imperialistic Great Power that it was before.' "

For this reason alone, Masaryk would have paid any price to see Czechoslovakia liberated by the British and Americans. "Send us your troops," he told President Roosevelt, "and you can have a blank cheque to do as you like." It was a forlorn hope. As the Allied forces closed in on Nazi Germany, Czechoslovakia lay in the path of the armies from the East.

The Czechoslovaks did their best to liberate themselves. In late August 1944, Slovakia rose against its puppet régime. The Nazis soon occupied the Western regions; but those in the centre proclaimed a "Free Slovakia", defended by part of the Slovak army, with the aid of partisan bands and some escaped French prisoners of war. Both Britain and America tried to help. SOE flew a mission in from Bari, but its commander was captured and shot; and although a Czech airborne brigade came in from Moscow, the Soviet Union refused airport facilities for SOE or its American counterpart, the Office of Strategic Services, OSS. A large OSS detachment, dropped into the Tatra mountains on 25 September, failed to make contact with the Slovak army, and was later captured. In October, after a coup had prevented Hungary from breaking off its alliance with Hitler, Nazi forces were able to move in from across the Hungarian border, and the Slovak rebellion was crushed.

SIX MONTHS LATER came one final upheaval. By now, the War was nearly over, and in Czechoslovakia the Soviet Red Army was the dominant force, sweeping across Slovakia and then Moravia—the armoured divisions, the marching columns, the staff cars and supply trucks followed by the Agitprop Brigade and Political Commissariat, with small light carts drawn by Cossack ponies bringing up the rear.

Rape, pillage, and drunken riots were commonplace: soon after Brno was liberated, more than 2,000 women sought hospital treatment for the effects of sexual assault. Knowing the Red Army's reputation, the inhabitants of Prague decided to forestall their liberators. On Saturday 5 May 1945, they came out on the streets, built anti-tank barricades, and began attacking the Nazi occupation forces. They also appealed to the Americans for military help. This was perfectly possible: the US Third Army under General George S. Patton was only 56 miles away, and the impetuous Patton was straining at the leash. Holding him back was General Eisenhower, the Supreme Commander. Through General Omar Bradley, commander of the Twelfth Army Group, Eisenhower ordered Patton to advance no further than a NW/SE line running through Plzeň, or Pilsen. Passing the message on, Bradley added that Patton "could and should reconnoiter as far as Prague." That same day, an OSS team headed by an American captain of Slovak origin actually drove from Pilsen to Prague in a jeep flying the Stars and Stripes. On the way, they passed through weary columns of German soldiers heading West to surrender to the Americans rather than the Russians. After contacting the Czech partisans, the jeep raced back to Patton, intending to guide him and the Third Army into Prague. Patton called Bradley. He was sympathetic, but felt obliged to check with Eisenhower. When he did, the order came to stop. Eisenhower, it seemed, had put the idea to the Soviet Chief of Staff, General Alexei Antonov; and he had turned it down categorically. Bradley broke the news to Patton. At this late date, he explained, Eisenhower was anxious to avoid "international complications." "For God's sake, Brad," said Patton, "it seems to me that a great nation like America should let others worry about complications." But he obeyed orders. The Third Army stayed put, and even Czechoslovak pilots of British aircraft were forbidden to fly to Prague. Partly as a result, more than 2,000 of its Resistance fighters were killed by the time the Red Army arrived on Wednesday, 9 May 1945—the day after the end of the War in the West.

IN THE WAKE OF the Red Army came the new Czechoslovak Provisional Government, an amalgam of the London and Moscow groups. In March, Beneš and Masaryk had flown to Moscow to discuss its composition. For Masaryk, the experience was dispiriting.

"I've been moving mountains," he told a diplomatic colleague, "to convince Stalin that I'm on his side; but he refuses to believe me." Ignoring the pledge of non-interference made in the Friendship Treaty two years earlier, Stalin and Molotov insisted that the new Czechoslovak Government must reflect the Russian and Communist role in the country's liberation. Beneš could still be President, and Jan Masaryk Foreign Minister; the Government could also include three "National Socialists", or Left-wing Liberals. But the Agrarian and other right-wing parties which had figured in the London Provisional Government were excluded; and the Communists were to be the biggest single group, with a total of seven seats.

The Deputy Prime Minister was to be their leader Klement Gottwald. Masaryk disliked him on sight. There were three Slovak Democrats, three Populists, and three Left-wing Socialists—including the Prime Minister, Zdeněk Fierlinger, whom Beneš had sent as his Wartime Ambassador to Moscow, but who while there had become a Com-

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munist pawn. "He is worse than Gottwald," said Masaryk: "I'd rather deal with the devil face to face than with something crawling in the woodwork." Masaryk's friend Marcia Davenport, the American novelist, described Fierlinger as having "a terrible face, narrow and pointed, with slitted eyes that never looked straight at you. Rat, I thought."

More telling than their physical appearance were the key posts the Moscow group held. The Minister of Defence was General Svoboda. The Ministers of the Interior, of Information, of Education, and of Agriculture were all Communists; so were junior ministers in the Foreign Office and the Departments of Industry and Social Welfare.

None of this should have surprised Edvard Beneš. From his first visit to Moscow in 1943 he had brought back—in an open envelope—a letter from Gottwald to his Party colleague in London, Václav Nosek. The Czechoslovak Communist Party, Gottwald had written, would

> "in all probability be the strongest party after the war. So we consider it obvious that Communists must be able to play a truly effective role in the new Government. This means, among other things, that the portfolios of the Interior and of Defence must be held by the Communists. The new Prime Minister, of course, must be a man of the bloc."

At the time, Beneš had privately noted: "The Communists' participation in the Government has one aim: to get hold of positions and have decisive influence in preparation for seizing all power in the State." To his democratic colleagues, Beneš had said nothing of his fears.

The Provisional Government ruled Czechoslovakia for just over a year. As was to be expected, it made some sweeping reforms—expelling German-speaking minorities, redistributing farmland, nationalising a number of industries. Then, on 26 May 1946, the country went to the polls to elect a Constituent Assembly. The Communist Party, which before the War had represented about 10% of the electorate, now won 38% of the votes. The Left-wing Socialists had 13%. This gave both together 153 of the 300 seats—a narrow majority. Klement Gottwald became Prime Minister. His Government included two more Communists, making nine in all, and two fewer Slovaks. Otherwise, little seemed to have changed. Beneš remained President, and Jan Masaryk was still Foreign Minister. Meanwhile, like other countries in Europe, Czechoslovakia was beginning to recover from the worst effects of the War. Output increased, and so did foreign trade—notably with the West. Prague bookshops were full of translations from English and American authors; street kiosks sold Western magazines and newspapers; people flocked to American films; many students, offered the choice, preferred to learn English rather than Russian. Pro-Western euphoria culminated at the beginning of July 1947, when in a tense all-night session Masaryk persuaded the Cabinet to accept the American offer of Marshall Aid. That evening, there was dancing in the streets of Prague.

THE MOOD CHANGED ABRUPTLY when Stalin forced Czechoslovakia to reject the Marshall Plan. A few days earlier, President Beneš had suffered a stroke. Even the weather turned hostile. That summer, all Europe was parched by drought: in Czechoslovakia, it caused forest and field fires which destroyed essential crops. Grain production reached only 63% of the target level, and the potato crop only 48%. Food soon became scarce, and had to be imported; to pay for it, consumer goods intended for use at home had to be sold abroad. Discontent mounted, and tension within the Cabinet became acute. On 11 September, a crude, botched attempt was made to assassinate Jan Masaryk and two of his democratic colleagues—the Minister of Justice, Prokop Drtina, and the leader of Beneš's Socialist Party, Peter Zenkl. Each was sent a wooden box, labelled PERFUME but containing high explosives. When the bombs were safely defused, the Communist Party accused their recipients of staging a fake plot; but, despite obstruction from Nosek's Ministry of the Interior, Drtina managed to trace the maker of the boxes, the maker of the bombs, and their sender. All were Communist officials—and their instigator proved to be Gottwald's son-in-law.

The non-Communists were further alienated, that October, by the setting-up of the Cominform, the international propaganda bureau dominated by the Soviet Union. A few weeks later, even the Left-wing Socialists were sufficiently stirred to depose their leader Fierlinger, who had signed a joint-action pact with Gottwald, but without even consulting his own Party. His colleagues now found the courage to denounce Communist bullying, especially in the factories. Their daily paper, *Pravo Lidu*, pointed out that "Meetings are usually called after working hours, when the majority of workers have left, and methods of voting are controlled by direct intimidation." "Don't trifle with the Communists," said Fierlinger. "They won't tolerate it: nor will the Russians."

Jan Masaryk, meanwhile, had gone to America, representing Czechoslovakia at the United Nations. To his chagrin, the Prague Government sometimes compelled him to vote with the Soviet Union against the United States. "It is too true," he wrote to an American friend,

> "that I am standing (not yet squatting) between two not too static and not too savoury stools. . . . I have been toying with the idea . . . to let myself go at one of the closing sessions. . . . I am certainly

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not going down the drain without making a considerable squawk.... Somewhere, sometime, somehow, I am going to stand on my hind legs and shout to the Great Powers, 'Gentlemen, your fly is open!'

But the timing—that's the problem."

He was still hoping, in fact, for help from the United States. Food at home was desperately short, and Czechoslovakia had appealed for 200,000 to 300,000 tons of American wheat. But in November, when Masaryk went to Washington, he found that US officials were reluctant to recommend it. The Ambassador in Prague, Laurence Steinhardt, was certainly in favour of "strengthening anti-communist forces in the government" there; yet in the previous June—at the time of the Marshall proposals—he had written in one of his despatches:

"It is my experience over the last 25 years that the hope of obtaining credits accomplished much more for us than once the credits had been extended."

Now, the State Department still seemed to feel that it could best invigorate the Czechoslovak democrats by withholding rather than granting aid.

IT WAS a tragic miscalculation. "At this point," said the Czechoslovak Foreign Trade Minister Hubert Ripka, "Gottwald got in touch with Stalin, who promised us the required wheat.... And now these idiots in Washington have driven us straight into the Stalinist camp.... The fact that not America but Russia had saved us from starvation will have a tremendous effect inside Czechoslovakia—even among the people whose sympathies are with the West rather than Moscow."

Masaryk did his best to explain his compatriots' plight. They were separated, he said, "by a great distance from the Western nations which could give them help directly and they were forced to make the best of a difficult situation caused by their contiguity to the Soviet sphere." He himself, he added, was "not always free to adopt the kind of position he would like to take." Sometimes, "Czechoslovakian policy had to cut across that of the US."

But the head of the State Department's Central European Division, James Riddleberger, distrusted what he called Masaryk's "smiling persuasions." "This man," he had written earlier, "might well have utilised his background and name to stand up to the Communist extremists.... I judge that he has been weak or blind."

Masaryk asked to see either President Truman or his Secretary of State, General George C. Marshall. The Truman Doctrine, after all, had condemned "coercion" and "political infiltration" everywhere, not just in the West; Marshall Aid had been offered to the whole of Europe; and Stalin had broken many promises since the war. But in 1947, as before and since, *Realpolitik* and *force majeure* won the day. On 6 November, in a top-secret briefing, Marshall told the US Cabinet:

"The halt in the Communist advance is forcing Moscow to consolidate its hold on Eastern Europe. It will probably have to clamp down completely on Czechoslovakia, for a relatively free Czechoslovakia could become a threatening salient in Moscow's political position."

As in 1938, Czechoslovakia was still "a far-away country", and the United States seemed to have written it off. Neither Truman nor Marshall had time to see Masaryk—even to explain themselves. He left Washington deeply depressed, but determined: he and his compatriots would have to fend for themselves.

Several American friends urged him to stay in the United States. His answer was always the same: he had promised his father that he would stand by Beneš. Nor was he wholly pessimistic. An election was due in May 1948. The Communists feared that they might lose it: the democrats were certainly planning to fight a vigorous campaign. Passing through London on the way back to Prague, Masaryk saw Sir Robert Bruce Lockhart, who recalled later:

"As we said goodbye, he made a great effort to be cheerful, clapped his hand on my shoulder, and smiled. 'Never mind, old boy, we'll beat the b.....s yet.'..."

THAT OPPORTUNITY never came. In early February 1948, to forestall the danger of a free election, the Czechoslovak Communists prepared a coup. Their Minister of the Interior, Václav Nosek, had already organised a network of secret-police units, and set up an illegal Workers' Militia. He had also systematically packed the regular police with members of the Communist Party. Now, on 13 February, he dismissed Prague's last eight non-Communist divisional commissioners—the only police rank entitled to issue arms and ammunition—and replaced them with his own men.

Prokop Drtina, the Minister of Justice, was furious—and alarmed. At his prompting, a majority of the Cabinet called upon Gottwald to rescind the order. He refused. Thinking to outflank him, the Government's twelve non-Marxist Ministers made what looked like a clever move: on 20 February they resigned. They hoped thereby to overthrow the Government—but the manoeuvre misfired. The Left-wing Socialist Ministers, who had backed the original protest, stayed on in office, giving Gottwald a quorum of thirteen. "Believe me," he told Masaryk afterwards, "we have spent months thinking how to carry out the *putsch*, what excuses to use, how to do it, then those ex-Ministers handed

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it to us on a plate. They gave us a perfect excuse, and all that was needed was to stand there and kick them in the behind, and this is what we did."

Masaryk had not been told of the resignation plan: he might well have opposed it. He heard about it afterwards, by telephone, when the resignations had already been handed in. As the only independent Minister, the bearer of his father's name and a symbol of his country's unity, Masaryk refused to take a party position; but to deny Gottwald his quorum he staged a diplomatic sore throat.

THE NEXT MOVE was up to Beneš. As President, he was empowered to reject the resignations; he could also call an early election. The twelve Ministers claimed that their plan had had his approval: some even alleged that he had actively encouraged it. Beneš, on the contrary, said later that it had taken him by surprise. Whatever the truth of the matter, he was dangerously out of touch. As late as 12 January, he had pooh-poohed the notion of a coup by the Communists. "I enjoy a certain authority in the nation," he had told a colleague. "A *putsch* would be directed against me as well, and they could not afford it."

But Gottwald had additional resources. On Sunday, 15 February, Soviet secret police had been flown in from Moscow. Twenty-three *NKVD* agents were in place at the Hotel Flora, and sixteen at the Grand Hotel Steiner. On 19 February, the day before the fatal resignations, Valerian Zorin, the former Soviet Ambassador, now a Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, had arrived in Prague unexpectedly, and 18,000 Red Army reinforcements had entered the Soviet zone of Austria, just across the Czechoslovak border.

Assured of this ominous backing, Gottwald went to see Beneš in Hradčany Castle, together with Nosek and General Svoboda. Curtly, he demanded that Beneš accept the resignation of the twelve democratic Ministers, and replace them with Communist sympathisers. He had conclusive proof, he claimed, that the twelve were plotting "a vast criminal conspiracy" against the Communist Party and the State—an allegation repeated by the State-owned radio. It was the exact reverse of the truth.

Beneš hesitated. Next day, a delegation of fifty-five workers invaded his office to repeat Gottwald's demand. Beneš answered that he would not "let the streets decide"; but when he proposed to broadcast to the nation that evening, the Communist Minister of Information declared: "We will not allow Beneš to appear before the microphone again." The twelve democratic Ministers faced a similar ban.

IN THE END, the streets decided. On the evening of the resignations, the radio had announced a mass meeting of workers in Prague. Through snow and bitter frost, busloads of Communist sympathisers were brought into the capital, to be addressed by Gottwald and his colleagues, shouting slogans, waving red flags, and singing the *Internationale*. While the regular army was confined to barracks, trucks escorted by Nosek's National Security Corps arrived with 10,000 brand-new rifles and 2,000 sub-machine-guns to arm the Workers' Militia. During the weekend, 15,000 militiamen paraded through the streets. For Monday, 23 February, a general strike was called. Those who refused to join it were beaten up, thrown out of the factories, and sacked from their jobs.

BY NOW, THE POLICE had sealed off the frontiers. When the twelve democratic Ministers returned to their offices on Monday morning, they found them controlled by Communist "Action Committees", and their own desks occupied by their political opponents; if they protested, they were manhandled from the premises. Non-Communists were likewise expelled from the broadcasting studios and the Ministry of Information. The radio faithfully relayed Gottwald's rabble-rousing speeches. Hundreds of journalists were arrested; several newspapers were taken over by the Communists; those that resisted found their newsprint supplies cut off. In the streets of Prague, police armed with sub-machine-guns patrolled the bridges and crossroads. They cordoned off all public buildings, and raided those of the democratic parties, arresting their staff and impounding their documents. Five truckloads of Fierlinger's supporters, armed to the teeth, moved in on the headquarters of the Left-wing Socialists, threatening to kill his opponents and forcibly securing his return to power.

For two days, some 10–12,000 students from Prague University led a counter-demonstration, marching up to Hradčany Castle to show their loyalty to the Republic and to Beneš, calling on him to address them. Masaryk's friend Marcia Davenport saw for herself what happened next:

> "Eight abreast, they were carrying the national tricolour and they were singing the national anthem, whose tragic refrain is '*Where is my home*?' They were fine and beautiful young people and they were the last honest open faces I saw in that country. I seized a coat and ran out of the house to go along near them on the pavement. . . . Then I heard another noise, a heavy roar, and another kind of tramping; it seemed to come from many directions. The students were nearing the gates of the Hrad. I stood still for a moment as I saw their ranks break and flailing violence falling on them. Then I heard shots. I knew I should not be in the street so I went back to the house. I stood at the window again and saw platoon after platoon of marching men, in ordinary clothes with red rags tied round their

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left arms, carrying rifles. Workers' Militia is what their Red bosses called them, but I did not know that or care, I clutched the sill and screamed, 'Armed civilians! Shame! Shame!' "

BY Wednesday afternoon, 25 February, it was all over. Shortly after 4 p.m., a vast throng of Gottwald's supporters cheered and applauded him as he drove back from the Castle to Vaclavske Namesti—Wenceslas Square—in the heart of Prague. He was wearing a Russian sheepskin cap, and he was drunk. He had just had his last audience with the President: Beneš had finally given in. Half the new Cabinet were Communists: the rest, with one exception, were puppets.

The exception was Jan Masaryk, who stayed on as Foreign Minister. "With this government, I shall enjoy governing," he told the press. Some of his friends, scandalised, took him literally. Others, who knew him better, feared that the Communists might see through his Švejk-like irony. Privately, he put inverted commas round the word "government." Why did he stay? Because Beneš had stayed—to avert a civil war and invasion by the Red Army. "In 1938," Beneš told him, "I had to bear the brunt of Munich alone when you were abroad. Now you must stay and help me and the country." Masaryk remembered his promise to his father, and stayed.

The Government, meanwhile, was conducting a purge. Friends and former colleagues were arrested. Masaryk himself lost his regular bodyguard, and was now accompanied everywhere by two leather-jacketed thugs. On the morning of 27 February, the former Minister of Justice, Prokop Drtina, was found lying seriously injured on the pavement below his third-floor window: he had tried to kill himself, it seemed, the night before. "It's a stupid way to go about it," Masaryk commented, "and besides, there's no guarantee of success. Furthermore, suicide doesn't absolve anybody of his responsibilities. It's a very poor escape."

Masaryk was talking at luncheon in Beneš's country house on Saturday, 6 March. By all accounts, the discussion was stormy. The atmosphere in Prague was certainly tense. A week earlier, Beneš had left Hradčany Castle, he said, for the last time; and on 2 March, against Masaryk's advice, the Ambassador in Washington had resigned and denounced the new Government. Inevitably, Masaryk was blamed. On Sunday, 7 March, he packed Marcia Davenport off to London. "If I know you are there waiting for me," he told her, "it gives me something to live for." He himself, she wrote, "looked and acted like a haunted man."

THAT SAME SUNDAY was his father's birthday. In the morning, he attended a commemorative rally in the pink-and-ochre Renaissance setting of the Old Town Square, to hear the Communist orators claim that Tómaš Masaryk would have approved of his country's "new course" and his son's presence in the Cabinet. "How dare they?" Masaryk growled. That afternoon, he went with his sister and niece to the quiet cemetery of Lany, to pay the regular family visit to Tómaš Masaryk's grave.

Next day, Monday 8 March, Masaryk spent some time going through his papers: according to one of his staff, he burned several basketsful. In the evening, he attended a further commemorative ceremony, this time at the Theatre of the Fifth of May.

On Tuesday morning, 9 March, just after 9 a.m., the family doctor, Oskar Klinger, paid his usual visit. He was a close friend, and had long been advising Masaryk to take a rest, suggesting a trip to the spa of Grăfenberg near the Polish frontier. But now, according to Dr Klinger, Masaryk unveiled other plans. "He reproached himself for having joined the new Government": the Communists' misuse of his father's name had "proved in the crassest manner that he, too, had been used as a puppet." He was making final plans to leave the country.

"We must leave together, Oskarku," he said. "I'll ring you tomorrow morning at seven o'clock and ask you for an injection. You understand? But you won't come here. This will be the signal that all is in good order. You jump into your car and drive straight to Brezany"—a country house outside Prague with a meadow big enough to be used as an airstrip. "We will be flown to England," Masaryk added. "Take only the barest necessities with you."

After Klinger had left, Masaryk again went out to Beneš's country residence, this time to attend the audience for the new Polish Ambassador. Twice on that occasion, he and Beneš talked together alone. Afterwards, Masaryk seemed cheerful, but Beneš rather depressed. All three of Masaryk's secretaries said later that the two men had agreed in principle to break with the Communist régime. Any such discussion in the President's house would undoubtedly have been picked up by the microphones of the secret police.

IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON, Masaryk returned to the Foreign Ministry at the Černinský Palace—a vast, imposing, coldly formal building with high vaulted ceilings, echoing reception rooms, and marble, glass-clad corridors. Near the north-east corner, on the second floor, was Masaryk's official apartment, reached by a small private lift. Except on formal occasions, he preferred to work here, in the long narrow sitting-room and library in which he also slept. After a few words with his secretaries, he dismissed them for a moment and changed into pyjamas: he was feeling tired, he said; his sore throat

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had developed into a cold, and he was going to work in bed. He went through some routine papers, then resumed a meeting, interrupted that morning, with a visitor from the Czechoslovak Embassy in London, whom he asked to come back tomorrow for a letter he planned to compose overnight. With his senior secretary, he began to draft the speech he was going to make—on Czechoslovak-Polish cooperation—when the new Cabinet was presented to Parliament on the following day. Finally, they discussed the next day's schedule. After the official ceremony, Masaryk planned to leave Prague—for a 14-day rest cure, he said.

Soon after 3 p.m., he had his dinner brought in on a tray: cold roast chicken, potatoes, and salad. He ate heartily, saying how much he had enjoyed it. He settled comfortably in bed with a large writing pad, and a bottle of beer and two bottles of mineral water on the night table. The window was opened as usual, he asked to be called at 8.30 a.m. Some time later, he took his two nightly Seconal pills—normally enough to rest him until 5 or 6 in the morning—and went to sleep.

It was the last night of his life.

THEY FOUND THE BODY in the early hours next morning—a blur of blue silk in the grey of the palace courtyard. It lay huddled, half on its back, the head a few yards from the wall, the legs slightly bent, the left arm folded, the right flung straight out. The fingertips were scratched; under the nails, there were traces of paint or plaster. The ankles were broken, with small splintered bones protruding. The blue pyjamas were soiled, the face contorted. On the belly was a narrow vertical scratch; like the hands, it was dirty with dust.

One of the palace stokers ran for some blankets. A sergeant from the National Security Corps telephoned for an ambulance, while another guard called headquarters. A police doctor confirmed that the body was lifeless, and it was carried on a stretcher up to the apartment. Soon, the palace was buzzing with guards, police, officials, and Ministers. A little later, the body was taken to the mortuary, and an autopsy was performed. Soon afterwards, the authorities announced that Jan Masaryk had committed suicide by jumping from the window of his bathroom.

Even at the time, there were those who doubted that story. Witnesses contradicted each other. When precisely had the body been found? Who exactly was on duty at the Černinský Palace that night? Who had access to Masaryk's apartment? Had there, or had there not, been visitors during the night? If Masaryk had wanted to kill himself, why risk failure—like Drtina—by throwing himself from a window, when he had access to sleeping pills? Why draft a speech for the next day's ceremony? Why use the bathroom window, which was obstructed, stiff to open, and smaller than the window of his bedroom, already left open the night before? Why had the body fallen three or four feet to the side of the bathroom window, not directly underneath?

And what about the state of the apartment? The bedroom was in total disorder—the bed awry, the pillows missing, the under-sheet torn from the mattress, the night table tilted, with books jutting over the edge, the ashtray full of varied cigarette-ends, the chairs overturned, doors and drawers open, broken bottles, glasses, and a cup lying on the floor. The bathroom was in a worse state still. The medicine-chest was empty, the floor littered with crushed glass, the bathmat tossed across the room, the towels in crumpled heaps. In the bath was one of the missing pillows; the other was under the basin. The window-seat was overturned, with fingermarks on the wall around it. The lavatory bowl was filthy, and there was a smear of excrement on the window-sill. Razor-blades had been scattered all over the room, and from a hook on the door hung a knotted cord made of drawstrings from several pairs of pyjamas—a hasty attempt, some thought, to mimic wild efforts at suicide.

TWENTY YEARS LATER, during the brief liberal lull of Alexander Dubček's "Prague Spring" in 1968, the American reporter Claire Sterling did her best to piece together what must have happened to Masaryk.

By then, sundry witnesses had died, many of them far from peacefully. Those dead from natural causes included two of the palace guards, and the doctor who had done the autopsy on Masaryk's body. He had failed to sign the burial certificate: some of his friends alleged that he had suspected murder, and had signed the post-mortem report only under duress. The police physician who had first pronounced Masaryk dead had himself died suddenly not long afterwards—at police headquarters: he was said to have injected petrol into his veins. A confidant of his, the editor of a Catholic newspaper, had been arrested on the same day, and had died in prison. A police superintendent who had seen Masaryk's body and declared that there was evidence of murder had also died, under interrogation. A security officer who had tried to investigate the case had been tortured and then shot. A few weeks earlier, on 27 May 1948, an alleged *NKVD* officer, Major Augustin Schramm, whom some believed to have been responsible for Masaryk's death, had been assassinated. Two supposed "hit men" had been tried and executed for the assassination, but both had protested their innocence: they had gone to Schramm's home, they said, but found another team there already. The security man who had investigated Schramm's death had shortly

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afterwards been dismissed from the service; so had the Prague CID officer who had briefly looked into Masaryk's death before the security police took over. The Chief of State Security had himself been dismissed two months after Masaryk's death; and Vladimír Clementis, Masaryk's deputy and successor as Foreign Minister, had been one of those hanged after the Slánský trial in 1952, when fourteen Jewish Communist officials had been arraigned on trumped-up charges of treason.

Examining evidence from the survivors, Mrs Sterling had to pick her way through thickets of evasion, innuendo, and fear.

One of Masaryk's secretaries, who insisted that his master had killed himself, proved both shifty and misleading. Even the State Prosecutor assigned to reopen the case in 1968 was caught out in several lies. It was impossible to determine, so many years later, just how Jan Masaryk had met his death; but Claire Sterling's conclusion, after exhaustive inquiries, was that he had indeed been murdered. Intruders, she believed, had broken into his quarters during the night: there were eleven ways in, and twenty-five keys to his private lift. They had awakened him quietly, and sat at his bedside, smoking and haranguing him. They knew all about his escape plan: that way out was stopped. Instead, he must jump to his death. When he refused, they had hauled him from the bed and tried to force him through the bedroom window; but he had fought back. Even at sixty-two, he was still big and powerful. Perhaps he had made a dash for the bathroom—the door was close to the bed. The struggle had left the bedroom in chaos. In the bathroom, someone's shoulder or elbow had hit the medicine chest, spilling its contents. One of the intruders had grabbed the pillows, to stifle him, perhaps in the bath. Suffocation can cause loss of sphincter control. As his strength ebbed, they had heaved him up on to the window-sill, then with a final struggling effort pitched him out into the night.

However it happened, Jan Masaryk—brave, funny, sad, scrupulous, loyal—had become a carcass. Almost to the end, he had seemed to hope that he could side-step, parry, and mitigate oppression like Jaroslav Hašek's *Good Soldier Švejk*. Now, it was as if that book had been cruelly rewritten by another author, born like Hašek in Prague and in the same year, 1883—the true prophet of nightmare, Franz Kafka. Two months after Masaryk's death, the Communists held a fresh election: but this time there was only one list of candidates. In June, Edvard Beneš resigned the Presidency; in September, he died. Czechoslovak democracy had already died that spring.

IT WAS THE LAST, textbook example of Soviet-backed Communist usurpation in Eastern Europe. Before long, indeed, the Czechoslovak Communist Party produced just such a textbook: *How Parliament Can Play a Revolutionary Part in the Transition to Socialism and the Role of the Popular Masses*. The methods it described were classic: later theorists would call them "salami tactics." First, impose Communist Ministers on a coalition Government, if possible in key posts like the Ministry of the Interior. Then gradually establish or infiltrate centres of power outside Parliament, for example by "arming the proletariat", forming Action Committees, and expanding your own secret police. This creates "a pincer movement operating from above and below." The end product is anti-democratic revolution, as in Prague in 1948.

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Sight Testing

Try the next line. Are the letters clearer
With the lens there or without?
She bends too close as the glass drops out.
Lust is in the eye of the wearer.

Opticians' reeded corridors
Bring back the exit lines we muffed.
From alligators, probably stuffed,
We collect our hats at what must be doors.

Across the road a church with a sharpened steeple
Has that El Greco print behind the altar
With a perspective he might have wished to alter
Had he seen properly, like other people.

John Miles

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FILM

Chaplin: Of Crime & Genius

A Psycho-Portrait—By DAVID ABERBACH

CHARLIE CHAPLIN (1889-1977) is one of those geniuses whose life story, in its essence, seems transparent in his art. The monumental rise from a London workhouse to a Hollywood studio, from abject poverty and dire neglect to limitless wealth, adoration and fame, the creation of enduring art out of the foul rag-and-bone shop of a melancholy Victorian childhood (it comes as no surprise that Chaplin greatly admired Dickens)—the main outline of Chaplin's life underlies his films and with the passage of time has virtually taken on the power of a myth.

Few would quarrel with Chaplin's place as the supreme master of film pantomime. As the creator of the best-known human character on film, he is virtually the only silent star who retains his universal appeal, particularly among children, and whose best films, in spite of their occasional naivety and maudlin sentimentality, are rarely equalled in their power to amuse and to move.

Chaplin's success, which coincided with the start of World War I, was so sudden and immense that he was quickly able to put himself out of the reach of studio vagaries, vicissitudes and rivalries which were to mar or ruin the careers of the Marx Brothers, Laurel & Hardy and, most tragically, Buster Keaton. He built his own studio, ruled it with a dictatorial hand, and made his films as much the exploration and expression of one man as possible. Through his films we know Chaplin more intimately, perhaps, than any actor in the history of the cinema.

Proust wrote that every artist has but one *oeuvre*—essentially Chaplin had one story in him. Each of his films tells, directly or obliquely, a fragment or variation of it. Some films, such as *The Kid* (1921) and *City Lights* (1930) tell bigger or more important chunks of the story than others and reveal with greater limpidity the main sources of Chaplin's creative urge. The hardest part of his story was kept until towards the end, in *The Great Dictator* (1940) and *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947). The psychological interest of these latter films is that when Chaplin abandoned the role of the Tramp and spoke for the first time on film, he chose to portray mass-murderers.

THOUGH CHAPLIN HATED and despised Hitler and was terrified of him, he also felt a perverse kinship with him, for he believed that the forces which had made him into a comedian and Hitler into a dictator were not dissimilar: "Just think, he's the madman, I'm the comic", he said at the time of making *The Great Dictator*. "But it could have been the other way around." Apart from the remarkable physical similarity and the fact that they were born in the same year, there was also the disrupted family backgrounds, the psychopathological tendencies, the need to control others, the unprecedented mass appeal, and above all the tremendous instinct for the theatrical. Chaplin once described Hitler as "the greatest actor of us all."[1]

Chaplin's identification with the criminal is reflected on a smaller scale also in his next film, *Monsieur Verdoux*, which was begun at the height of the carnage of World War II. Based on a true story, it tells of a bank clerk who marries women for their money, then murders and incinerates them. In the end he is caught and brought to trial. Before being sentenced to death he argues his innocence by claiming that governments are in the business of mass murder—he is only a small entrepreneur.

Chaplin's role as the murderer was, nevertheless,

[1] Charles Chaplin, Jr, with N. & M. Rau, *My Father, Charlie Chaplin* (1960).

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foreshadowed in his Little Tramp character. The Tramp often shows signs of criminality, in his petty larcenies and his sadism which are part of his world of flophouses, grimy alleys, drunkenness, illness, cold and hunger. He is not above stealing from the blind or maltreating women and children. Chaplin's comedy, his pathos and loveability, obscure the fact that he is also one of the most cruel of comedians.

CHAPLIN'S delinquent streak was present in childhood. In his *Autobiography*,[2] he writes that after growing up in Edwardian England, he could understand the Teddy Boy of the 1950s,

> "his attitude perhaps motivated by a subconscious feeling that man is only a half-tame animal who has for centuries governed others by deceit, cruelty and violence. . . ."

Chaplin saw himself as something of a "half-tame animal", his creative urge having its roots partly in asocial impulses. According to his son, Charles Jr, Chaplin was once approached by gangsters who flattered him by promising that if he ever needed someone bumped off all he had to do was to call them. He was delighted to find that "many of these people in the underworld admire the creative principle."

One of the many facets of Chaplin's creativity lies in his unusual ability to free-associate, and spontaneously to juxtapose seemingly unconnected objects or incidents which, like the consecutive incidents in dreams, yield clues to the workings of the unconscious. Chaplin's *Autobiography* is by no means a conventional one in which events are related in consecutive order, though there is a rough chronological sequence. Often there are peculiar twists and jumps in time; in the strangest of these, the account of his mother's declining years is flanked on one side by his visit to Sing Sing penitentiary in the early 1920s, and on the other side by his argument that the criminal and the genius are similar by nature. Chaplin tells vividly of his horror at the inhuman conditions at Sing Sing, his memory of a man unjustly imprisoned, the sinister-looking electric chair. Then he describes his mother's last years in Santa Monica—he brought her over from England in 1921 and she lived in California until her death in 1928. Immediately after the account of her death, he returns to the early 1920s and gleefully relates a conversation that he had with the sculptress Clare Sheridan, who had made a bust of him:

> " 'This should be the bust of a criminal,' I said. 'On the contrary, it's the head of a genius.' I laughed and developed a theory about the genius and the criminal being closely allied. . . ."

The *Autobiography* opens not with Chaplin's birth but with the revelation that his mother went insane when he was twelve. Actually, she had been unstable for years and had spent time in an asylum several years previously. At that time, Chaplin and Sydney (his older half-brother) had passed into the care of his father whom he hardly knew—father and mother had separated when Chaplin was one year old—but within a few months mother and children were reunited. The mother was committed again to an asylum, this time for over a year. Her tragedy, which occurred after the father's death, was apparently the critical event of Chaplin's early years. It marked the total break-up of his family and it forced Chaplin and his brother to fend for themselves. By the time the mother regained her sanity both were independent and Chaplin had begun his acting career. However, within a few years, when he was about sixteen and firmly established in the theatre, she suffered a relapse and spent the rest of her life in care.

The mother's insanity caused deep and lasting guilt, for Chaplin was at an age when he would have suspected or believed that he was somehow responsible. He never forgot her remark, "If only you had given me a cup of tea . . . I would have been all right"; and he connected this with Joseph Conrad's remark that life made him feel like a cornered rat waiting to be clubbed. Was Chaplin's identification with the criminal, and even with Hitler, due in part to his exaggerated sense of guilt towards his mother?

Like many children in similar situations, Chaplin blamed not only himself but also his mother for having "deserted" him. When she first went mad he was not yet eight, but had already spent over a year in workhouses and schools for orphans and destitute children, experiences which, no doubt, increased his ambivalence towards her. (The moment in *The Kid* when the child raised by the Tramp is torn from his arms and hauled off to an orphanage must owe some of its power to Chaplin's memory of being taken from his mother when he was sent to the Lambeth workhouse.) When Sydney told him the news he could not believe it:

> "I did not cry, but a baffling despair overcame me. Why had she done this? Mother, so lighthearted and gay—how could she go insane?

[2] Charles Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (1964).

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Vaguely I felt that she had deliberately escaped from her mind and had deserted us."

City Lights, Chaplin's most touching and intimate film, was begun soon after his mother's death in 1928. Its unprecedented pathos and conviction reflect Chaplin's mourning and his efforts to come to terms with his mother's insanity and to achieve restitution with her. The film is Chaplin's most accomplished fantasy of rescuing a woman in distress, a theme which recurs over and over in his films. The Tramp falls in love with a blind flower-girl, luminous and impoverished, and allows her to believe that he is fabulously wealthy. He discovers by chance that an operation can restore her sight, and much of the film is a series of vignettes depicting his brilliantly comic and pathetic efforts to raise money for the operation. After obtaining the money and giving it to her, he is imprisoned for theft. By the time he is freed, the girl's sight has been restored and she has opened a flower shop. He passes the shop and gazes through the window. She does not recognise him, and he hurries on. But something about his intense look of longing impels her to run after him to press a flower and a coin into his hand. Of this scene James Agee has written,

"It is enough to shrivel the heart to see, and it is the greatest piece of acting and the highest moment in films. 'You?' she asks. He nods, smiling shyly. 'You can see now?' he asks. 'Yes, I can see now.' "[3]

IN AN EARLY DRAFT of the story, described in the *Autobiography*, Chaplin was to play a clown blinded in a circus accident:

"He has a little daughter, a sick, nervous child, and when he returns from the hospital the doctor warns him that he must hide his blindness from her until she is well and strong enough to understand, as the shock might be too much for her. His stumblings and bumpings into things make the girl laugh joyously."

As a child, Chaplin could not have understood clearly the nature of his mother's illness. These tragi-comic gropings could represent his own

[3] James Agee, "Comedy's Greatest Era", in *Agee on Film*, Vol. 1 (1963).

Chaplin's Charlie & Adolf's Hitler

EVER since "The Great Dictator" (1940) there has of course been a fateful, if often very facile, association made between the two personalities of Chaplin and Hitler. In a recent interview in "The Standard" (London, 17 February 1983) the 80-year-old Lord (Robert) Boothby recalled his meeting in Berlin with Adolf Hitler:

"He was sitting at this desk at the end of a long room. I had to walk all that way towards him, and I had had a very good lunch so I wasn't walking too steadily. He was writing. Didn't look up. When I got to him he leapt to his feet, put his arm up in that salute, and said 'Hitler.'

"People say he said 'Heil Hitler', but it wasn't like that. Chap doesn't hail himself. So I brought my arm up. 'Boothby.' Didn't say anything.

"He was a man of medium height. Utterly undistinguished. Not nearly as distinguished as Charlie Chaplin. . . ."

THE ASSOCIATION *between "The Great Dictator" and the great dictator himself sometimes takes on almost "mystical" undertones, as in the memoirs of Albert Speer who was throughout the Third Reich "*der Führer*'s architect." Speer, after his release from Spandau prison, having served his 20-year Nuremberg Trial sentence, gave an interview to James P. O'Donnell, who has recorded it in* ENCOUNTER *(June 1978, pp. 25–33) in his article "Charlie Chaplin, Adolf Hitler, & Napoleon."*

"In . . . Chaplin's spoof on der Führer *there are several scenes that, as we now know—from the memoirs of Albert Speer and other inside sources—only truly took place* **after** *Chaplin the artist had recorded them on celluloid! Yet another case of nature imitating art? In the film, for example, the dictator Adenoid Hynkel was finally overthrown by a revolt of his own army officers. Just such a revolt took place in July 1944. In another scene, Chaplin as Hynkel danced a ballet in his chancellery, spinning a blue balloon-atlas on his fingertips, 'the great globe itself.' I once asked Albert Speer about this, and he told me:*

'Imagine my embarrassment when, just a few years ago (1972), I at long last got to see Mr Chaplin's classic film. His globe, which finally blew up in his face, was actually 20 centimetres *smaller* in diameter than the real globe I had installed in Hitler's private study when I built the New Reich Chancellery in 1938.'

As far as I can corroborate the timing of the coincidence, Chaplin in his Hollywood studio was already working on this scene in 1938—which is to say, simultaneously with Speer who was then at work in his Berlin studio. . . ."

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attempts to take on the burden of "seeing", of understanding, and coming to terms with his consequent feelings of disablement, betrayal, guilt and violent anger. His salient methods of doing so are the synthesis of the comic and the tragic, and the splitting of the image of woman and of his own character. Whereas in the final version of *City Lights* the blind girl, the essence of idealisation, is saved, in *Monsieur Verdoux* the women, with one exception, are abhorrent and are brutally murdered. It may be that by splitting the idealised and the despised image of women and by presenting himself, on the one hand, as the romantic dreamer rescuing his beloved and, on the other hand, as the criminal uninhibited by moral restraints, Chaplin deals with his profound ambivalence towards his mother.

A memory of Chaplin's from the period of his mother's first return from the asylum is, no doubt, a screen memory representing a whole aspect of his childhood and personality, and particularly his terror at the collapse of whatever childhood security he had known. He himself suspected that this incident might have anticipated the premise of his films—the combination of the comic and the tragic:

> "At the end of our street was a slaughterhouse, and sheep would pass our house on their way to be butchered. I remember one escaped and ran down the street, to the amusement of onlookers. Some tried to grab it and others tripped over themselves. I had giggled with delight at its lambent capering and panic, it seemed so comic. But when it was caught and carried back into the slaughterhouse, the reality of the tragedy came over me and I ran indoors, screaming and weeping to Mother, 'They're going to kill it! They're going to kill it!' "

Soon after his mother's return from the asylum, when he was not yet nine, Chaplin was apprenticed to a travelling group of clog-dancers. Though he must have been lonely, depressed, and anxious, he does not mention this and does not write of missing his mother. He does interpolate an account of various English comedians who committed suicide. Difficult as it was to live without his mother, it was probably even harder to live with her. In his account, he developed asthma on returning home and his mother withdrew him from the troupe. The strangling effect of his home life, which he describes as "a quagmire of miserable circumstances", might have been expressed in this symptom—for months, Chaplin writes, he could hardly breathe and at times he wanted to end it all by jumping out of the window.

DESPITE the vividness of Chaplin's account of these early years, there are notable blank spots, and much of the *Autobiography* is sketchy and unreliable. Most significantly, Chaplin's mother remarried and had two children between her stays in the asylum (c.1898–1902), but Chaplin omits this completely. His impression of her betrayal must have been intensified by these events. Also, he describes the grand funeral of his father in 1901, whereas in fact he was buried in a pauper's grave. In real life as in his portrayal of the Tramp, Chaplin denied the full extent of his degradation. Nevertheless, despite its unreliability, the *Autobiography* does convey the extreme sense of chaos and unpredictability, the abrupt shifts in fortune, the suffering, the pity, and the hopes which he knew as a child. It is no wonder that in later life, as Charles Jr writes, "He was happiest, most comfortable, when things were the same, when you rose in the morning with the certainty of what you were going to do at four in the afternoon. . . ."

CRITICS such as Raoul Sobel and David Francis are mistaken in playing down the effects of Chaplin's early experiences on his later development:

> "Poverty when it came, only lasted three or four years, after which he was in almost continuous work. Even the workhouse and orphanage he was sent to would have been nothing like as terrifying as at the beginning of Victoria's reign. They supplied meat and fresh milk every day and provided a balanced diet many poor people nowadays would be grateful to receive. Of course, there must have been periods of near-starvation when his mother was in the asylum and his brother at sea; moments of despair, of loneliness, hopelessness, of biting shame, but they did not last forever."[4]

Recent research in child development, as shown in John Bowlby's three-volume study of *Attachment and Loss* (1969–1980), leaves no doubt that the disruption of Chaplin's bond with his mother was at least as important as their poverty, though the material and the emotional sufferings were linked. To a child, the sight of the mother going insane and being separated from her, the last source of parental support, and having no loving substitute to fall back on, is likely to cause lifelong emotional scars. According to Chaplin's second wife, Lita Grey, he confessed to her a source of deeper hurt than poverty, "a feeling that his mother had failed him when he needed her most."[5]

The material poverty "did not last forever", but to the child it probably seemed forever. The sense of being emotionally impoverished, expressed in the character of the Tramp, stayed with Chaplin long

[4] Raoul Sobel and David Francis, *Chaplin: Genesis of a Clown* (1977).
[5] Lita Grey Chaplin, with Morton Cooper, *My Life with Chaplin* (1966).

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after he became a millionaire and the most famous man in the world. Certain traits—his extreme shyness (Stan Laurel, who knew him well, said that he was "desperately shy"), his "romantic hunger" (his own phrase); his instability; his fierce independence; his submissiveness; his "colossal ego" (as Charles Jr called it); his love of power; his lack of self-confidence; his compulsive acquisition of wealth; his many difficulties in human relationships—originated, at least in part, in the unstable and eventually disrupted childhood bonds.

Though Chaplin's main troubles clearly lay with his mother and he hardly saw his father except for the brief time after his mother's first breakdown, the father—and his absence—strongly influenced his view of human behaviour and relationships. His father was quiet and easy-going when sober, but violent when drunk. (To the end of his life, Chaplin remembered that whenever his mother was angry with him, she would say, "You'll end up in the gutter like your father.") Men in Chaplin's films appear to embody a split of this sort. In *The Gold Rush*, the Tramp's companion, a friend in normal circumstances, literally tries to eat him when they are starving; and in *City Lights*, the Tramp's millionaire friend offers to help him when drunk but cannot remember him when sober.

Like his father, Chaplin was given to abrupt shifts in mood, and had a volcanic temper which sometimes erupted at the least provocation. Charles Jr witnessed many of these outbursts as a child, and remembered how frightened he was as the violence of his father's anger was so out of proportion to the cause. His mother, Lita Grey, was a frequent target of Chaplin's hysterical tirades during their short, stormy marriage in the mid-1920s. Chaplin's cameraman, Roland Totheroh, corroborates these recollections:

> "He got in the bathroom and if the door wouldn't open, he'd pull the handles off the door. He broke windows and everything else up there when he'd go into a tantrum. That's why he had Dr. Reynolds [an eminent psychiatrist and a close friend of Chaplin's]. He always figured he was going to go insane." [6]

This irrational rage and the fear of insanity shed light on Chaplin's identification with Hitler, whom he regarded as a madman.

At other times, Chaplin would lapse into severe depressions which had apparently plagued him since childhood. He was remembered by neighbours and friends in London as a very quiet child who would suddenly erupt with absurd bursts of gaiety. The atmosphere which he calls up in his childhood recollections is strikingly similar to that in some of his films. He writes of his life at the schools for orphans: "It was a forlorn existence. Sadness was in the air." The days after his mother went insane for the first time, when he lived with his father and the father's dissipated mistress, were "the longest and saddest of my life." His memories of the furniture and decoration in his father's house indicate his depressed, morbid state: "the wallpaper looked sad, the horsehair furniture looked sad, and the stuffed pike in a glass case that had swallowed another pike as large as itself—the head sticking out of its mouth—looked gruesomely sad. . . ."

During his mother's second bout of mental illness, when she was occasionally so violent that she had to be kept in a padded room, Chaplin was on tour in a production of *Sherlock Holmes*. At this time, he recalled, he was severely withdrawn and depressed:

> "I got accustomed to living alone. But I got so much out of the habit of talking that when I suddenly met a member of the company I suffered intense embarrassment. I could not collect myself quickly enough to answer questions intelligently, and they would leave me, I am sure, with alarm and concern for my reason."

Later, after he joined Fred Karno's vaudeville company, there were a number of occasions when Karno was ready to dismiss him as his brooding presence offstage had such a demoralising effect on the rest of the company. On stage, however, he was Karno's leading comedian. Afterwards, when he became famous in pictures, his depression, isolation, and loneliness did not end: "I had always liked the public's attention, and here it was—paradoxically isolating me with a depressing sense of loneliness."

IN LATER YEARS, TOO, depression was a frequent visitor. Charles Jr recalled that when his father was depressed he became very quiet:

> "Anything might bring on these spells—even the account of a tragedy in a newspaper could upset him—but they usually visited him when he felt deserted by the creative impulse, when he would wait in vain for ideas that wouldn't come. It was as though he were bound hand and foot in some dark dungeon of the mind."

It is likely that Chaplin needed to work to ward off depression, and for this reason was most afflicted when he was unable to work. An acquaintance, Jim Tully, wrote that Chaplin's favourite story was that of Joseph Grimaldi, the famous English-Italian clown who was so sad that he went to a doctor. "I recommend that you see Grimaldi." To which the poor man replied, "I am Grimaldi."[7]

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[6] Timothy J. Lyons, "Roland H. Totheroh Interviewed", *Film Culture*, Spring 1972. See also Timothy J. Lyons, *Chaplin: A Reference Guide* (1979).

[7] Jim Tully, *A Dozen and One* (1943).

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Chaplin's depressive tendencies and his sudden outbursts of rage were owing in part to the bond with the mother and her insanity. The pathos of this bond lay in the apparent fact that although she was an adoring and an adored mother, he could not bear her. In her last years he could not see her without being plunged into depression:

> "I'm so thrown off when I go to see her that I can't create, I can't function, for days. I know she's not in pain, but when I look at her, when I remember how beautiful and gay she once was, when I see how her mind's not working, I get too upset. It's best that I keep away from her unless it's absolutely necessary that I go to her."

But already during his adolescence, Chaplin found it almost impossible to live with his mother. He remembered fighting back depression when they lived together for the last time, for a few weeks when he was about fourteen: "Poor Mother, who wanted so little out of life to make her gay and cheerful, reminded me of my unhappy past—the last person in the world who should have affected me this way. . . ."

CHAPLIN'S AMBIVALENCE towards his mother was the more difficult for him to bear because he regarded her as his greatest teacher and attributed to her his genius at pantomime. Anthony Asquith's praise of Chaplin is universally acknowledged as true:

> "I have never known anyone to compare with him in the power to make real and vivid a person he has met or an incident he has seen in the street. It was not a question of mimicry or verbal description, it was an act of creation. He, himself, disappeared, leaving a kind of ectoplasm from which the people, the setting, the event, materialised."

Chaplin acquired this gift from his mother who at one time was a successful music-hall star:

> "I learned from her everything I know. She was the most astounding mimic I ever saw. She would stay at the window for hours, gazing at the street and reproducing with her hands, eyes and expression all that was going on down there, and never stopped. It was in watching and observing her that I learned not only to translate motions with my hands and features, but also to study mankind. She was a far greater artist than I will ever be. She gave me all she had and asked nothing in return. . . ."

Still, this very gift and the success which it brought were sources of ambivalence, for Chaplin knew that he had paid a heavy price. When he brought his mother to the United States, she asked him, "Wouldn't you rather be yourself than live in this theatrical world of unreality?" He replied, "You're responsible for this unreality."

OTHER REVEALING ANECDOTES about Chaplin's mother, told by R. J. Minney,[8] suggest that her life was rooted in the past, when hunger and danger were part of everyday life:

> "Once when Syd went to see her, she went into the dining-room and brought him an apple and some oranges. 'Slip these into your pocket', she said. 'You might get hungry. You'll need them.' On another occasion, when the doctor was round, he referred to her brilliant sons. 'They are both doing so well. Everybody is talking of them', he said, but she just looked at him blankly and replied: 'I have no sons.' 'But, Mrs Chaplin, I'm talking of Charlie—and of Syd. Why, they are world-famous. You must be very proud of them.' 'I have no children', she repeated. After the doctor had gone, the nurse asked: 'Why did you say that, Mrs Chaplin? Both the boys are here so often.' 'Well,' she said, 'I don't know what might have happened. They might be in some sort of trouble. Somebody may be after them.' "

According to Lita Grey, whenever Chaplin's mother picked up her grandchildren, Charles or Sydney, Chaplin would become visibly alarmed. He was terrified that she might suddenly do something irresponsible, such as drop them out of the window. (Charles Jr relates that Chaplin himself would never pick him up as a child—perhaps he was afraid of similar irresponsibility in himself.) In the *Autobiography*, Chaplin tells of an incident at an ostrich farm where his mother snatched an ostrich egg from an attendant, saying, "Give it back to the poor

"FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE" 3/21/1939

THE FOLLOWING statement was released by Charlie Chaplin yesterday:

"Owing to erroneous reports in the press that I have abandoned my production concerning dictators, I wish to state that I have never wavered from my original determination to produce this picture. Any report, past, present or future to the effect that I have given up the idea, is deliberately false. I am not worried about intimidation, censorship or anything else. I am making a comedy picture on the lives of dictators which I hope will create much healthy laughter throughout the world."

(Signed) CHARLIE CHAPLIN

in: *My Life in Pictures* (1974)

[8] R. J. Minney, *Chaplin, The Immortal Tramp* (1954).

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bloody ostrich", and tossed it into the corral where it exploded. Though this is told as an amusing story, it also illustrates the tragic instability which could lead her inadvertently to hurt her own children in the process of trying to protect them.

YET CHAPLIN'S ABILITY to empathise with his mother's suffering, despite his own pain, accounts in no small measure for his art being ultimately an affirmation of life. As he sat beside her on her death-bed, "a flood of memories surged in upon me of her lifelong struggle, her courage and her tragic, wasted life . . . and I wept." It is true that he follows this up by writing of the affinities between the genius and the criminal. He hints at his own criminally violent and guilty impulses towards his mother, which found indirect expression in his films, especially *Monsieur Verdoux*. But then he asserts his faith:

> "The ways of life and death . . . may seem futile and meaningless. . . . My faith is in the unknown, in all that we do not understand by reason; I believe that what is beyond our comprehension is a simple fact in other dimensions, and that in the realm of the unknown there is an infinite power of good."

Though Chaplin's bond with his mother was not so disturbed that it led him to feel that life was uncompromisingly futile and meaningless, it did help to blight most of his attachments to women. He needed maternal affection, but as he was terribly insecure and had to be in control he was particularly drawn to very young women who adored him and whom he could manipulate. Three of his four wives were teen-age girls. But the last, Oona O'Neill (the daughter of Eugene O'Neill), gave him the understanding, the security, the affection and the happiness (not to speak of eight children!) which he had always sought. This marriage lasted for over 30 years, until his death in 1977. Prior to this, his married life had been largely a sordid mess. Lita Grey reported him as saying at the time of his marriage to Oona in 1943: "I never understood women. I mistrusted them. When they got too close I conquered them, but I couldn't love them for long because I was convinced they couldn't love me. . . ."

Chaplin's idealisation of women in his films was entirely autobiographical, a measure of his need to keep women at a distance and of his wish for reassurance in his chronic dependence. Stan Laurel has said that from childhood he was "always expecting to meet the beautiful princess who would fall in love with him as deeply as he fell in love with her, and they'd live happily ever after." [9] Chaplin himself put it like this: when he was a young man "no woman could measure up to that vague image I had in my mind." Of his first love, when he was sixteen, he wrote: "I began to sink further into the hopeless mire of silent love. I hated this weakness and was furious with myself for lack of character. It was an ambivalent affair. I both hated and loved her. . . ." When he was nineteen he proposed impetuously to a chorus girl whom he had taken out a handful of times. When they broke up, he said, "Already, you have too much of a power over me." Laurel described this girl as the first of Chaplin's "little fairy princesses." On his triumphant return to London in 1921, some twelve years later, Chaplin was still thinking of her, "the one audience I should have liked to meet again." On learning that she had died, he felt that "the bottom had fallen out of my world."

NOT LONG AFTER HIS RETURN to the United States, Chaplin started work on *A Woman of Paris*—at this time, too, he brought his mother over. This film is notable, among other things, for being the only one in which he explores a disturbed attachment of mother and son as a contributory cause of the son's troubles with an idealised woman. In the film, which Chaplin wrote and directed (but did not star in), a young artist shares a studio apartment in Paris with his mother. He proposes to a woman whom he remembers and loves as the innocent country girl who was once his fiancée. However, since coming to Paris, she has become the mistress of a rich, charming voluptuary. His mother overhears the proposal and talks him out of it. The next evening, racked with despair, he commits suicide. In this and other films Chaplin seems to be exploring territory to which his psychopathology led him, but he never went so far in real life—perhaps partly because his films were cathartic. *Monsieur Verdoux*, which Chaplin regarded as his best film, appears to have satisfied most completely feelings which derived from the break-up of his family and his mother's madness: his sadistic impulses towards women, his ruthless drive for worldly success, his need to assert his innocence, and his masochism in assuaging his guilt (Verdoux being in the end condemned to death).

In Chaplin's silent films, the pathos and comedy of the Little Tramp make bearable the harsh realities which he confronts: orphanhood and separation (*The Kid*); murder, cannibalism, greed (*The Gold Rush*); suicide, blindness (*City Lights*). Chaplin had more than a glimpse of the lower depths of human existence, and his understanding of the hideous effects of his childhood is vivid in his films. Yet, in all his great pictures, redemption through love is finally, if shakily, achieved. To this must be attributed their astonishing, living humanity.

[9] John McCabe, *Charlie Chaplin* (1978).

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LETTERS

"Brecht: The Bitter Bread of Exile"

ON PAGE 20 of the December issue Martin Esslin ("Brecht: The Bitter Bread of Exile") attributes to Spengler and Gobineau the doctrine that Jews are "incapable of producing genuine *Kultur*."

I have read quite a bit by and about Oswald Spengler, and there is nothing to remotely indicate that he ever had any such opinion, and certainly never expressed it if he did have it. He was openly contemptuous of Hitler's anti-Semitism. Please refer Mr Esslin to Frau Wagner's well-known letter to Spengler. For further impressions, read the first two sections of Reck-Maleszewski's *Diary of a Man in Despair*.

Where did the idea ever come from that Spengler was anti-Semitic?

JOHN W. BOWLING

Troy, Alabama

I ADMIT the way I put it is ambiguous. But I was not making a statement about Spengler's (or Gobineau's) anti-Semitism. I was stating what the Nazis were saying. I wrote: "It is not without significance that the Nazis justified their extermination of the Jews on the grounds—proclaimed by men like Spengler and Gobineau—that they were incapable of producing 'high' culture." And this the Nazis undoubtedly did. I still remember many endless discussions with Nazi fellow-students of mine, they quoted Spengler on the inevitable "Caesarism" of the declining West, and its commercialism (which they linked with the predominance of grasping Jews), going on to cite Gobineau's view that only the Aryan race could produce a high culture. The point of the passage involved surely merely was that Germans tended to regard their own nation as the *Kulturnation par excellence*.

MARTIN ESSLIN

Stanford University
California

Noël Coward, Maligned

DAVID CANNADINE'S article on Noël Coward (March) is not the kind of thing one expects, or wishes, to read in ENCOUNTER.

He tells us very little about the literary merits of Noël Coward's plays, but gives us to understand that his achievement was vitiated by his political sentiments, which were instinctive rather than intellectual,and ruinously conservative and imperialistic. We know that authors have to have progressive views to qualify for Nobel Prizes, but must this also be necessary to secure approval from your critics? One does not have to have subscribed to Noël Coward's political opinions to see that the validity of them is becoming increasingly evident. Recent leaks from the Government's "think tank" suggest that our leading conservative intellectuals are now struggling to articulate just those "instinctive" sentiments which Noël Coward expressed with such brave honesty and clarity and wit.

But even if Noël Coward's politics were objectionable, what difference would that make to the literary value of his plays? Surely we are not to believe that if he had shared the communist opinions of O'Casey and Brecht—or Shaw's slavish admiration for Stalin, Hitler and Mussolini—or Oscar Wilde's self-indulgent socialism, he would have been a better dramatist? Noël Coward's plays have lasted, and will last, because most of them are simply remarkably good plays; he also gives us some unforgettable films, songs, light music and performances as an actor. It is true that he sometimes spoke ungraciously of left-wing intellectuals, but the article you publish serves only to suggest that he was wholly justified in doing so.

MAURICE CRANSTON

Garrick Club
London

MAURICE CRANSTON seems to have misunderstood my article even more than he thinks I have misunderstood Noël Coward. I rather think that he is shooting at the wrong man.

DAVID CANNADINE

Christ's College
Cambridge

Correct Views & Revues

NOËL COWARD wrote "sparkling *revues*" (ENCOUNTER, March, p. 36).

You, Sir, are the editor of a "sparkling *review*."

RICHARD FORD

Nouveau Kermont
Chambesy, Switzerland

"KOR" in Poland*

WE HAVE LEARNED with alarm and dismay that Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Jan Jozef Lipski, Jan Litynski and Henryk Wujec—all members of the now dissolved KOR—are to be tried in Warsaw under the grotesque charge of "preparing a violent overthrow of Poland's socio-political system." Under the Polish criminal code, those found guilty of this charge can be liable to a capital sentence. Zbigniew Romaszewski, also a KOR member, has been sentenced to four and a half years in prison for running "Radio Solidarity."

KOR (the Workers' Defence Committee, later renamed the Public Self-Defence Committee) was a human rights organisation set up in 1976 to provide material, moral, medical and legal help to workers persecuted after the summer strikes. It was a body of about 30 intellectuals whose ages ranged from the twenties to the nineties.

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* Copy of a letter sent to and published in *The Times* (London 2 March 1983).

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During the five years of its courageous activity (its members were repeatedly arrested, harassed and beaten up by police), KOR attracted a large number of collaborators and sympathisers, and it became not only the most active human rights organisation in the Soviet bloc but also a real moral force among Polish workers, intellectuals and young people. It operated by entirely peaceful means, never encouraging, let alone using, violence. The only violence used was on the part of the Government, both before the emergence of Solidarity and thereafter.

KOR decided to dissolve itself in September, 1981, because it believed that various agencies of Solidarity would be better prepared to take up its tasks. Most of its members were interned after military dictatorship was imposed on 13 December, 1981.

The release of the KOR members, and of all other political prisoners in Poland, is a matter of urgent concern to us. The continuing persecutions in Poland adversely affect international relationships and the cause of peace in Europe.

We refuse to give any credence whatever to the charges against the members of KOR.

ISAIAH BERLIN, MICHAEL HOWARD, BRIGGS, RAYMOND KLIBANSKY, HEDLEY BULL, STEVEN LUKES, DAVID CAUTE, IRIS MURDOCH, RALF DAHRENDORF, KARL POPPER, ERNEST GELLNER, QUINTON, STUART HAMPSHIRE, TOM STOPPARD, BERNARD WILLIAMS

On the Palestinian Case

Rhetoric & Realities—By LIONEL BLOCH

HAD I BEEN a Palestinian, I would be rather disappointed by Dr Sullivan's impassionate strictures [ENCOUNTER, March]. It is not so much that his commitment does not shine brightly through the slender strands of his assertions, but rather the fact that his kind of rhetoric does not do the Palestinians' case very much good. He accuses those he disagrees with of "misperceptions of reality" but he appears himself quite ill at ease with the hard facts of the international scene.

To start with, it is by no means self-evident that the Palestinian case for self-determination is as morally exigent and unarguable as is the Israeli one. But this is not the real point. The world is, after all, full of peoples with unarguable cases for self-determination: the Kurds, the Armenians, the Macedonians, to name but three. Yet, although their claims have a much more ancient and more respectable lineage than that of the Palestinians, hardly anybody cares a fig about the destiny of these forsaken people. Their fate and frustrations do not engage the attention of the world's mass media or the universal emotions of liberal conscience. They are the unlamented debris of history.

The Palestinians are treated differently—not because their case is more deserving, but for good, hard old-fashioned *raisons d'état*.

For the Soviet Union, the disaffection of the Palestinians is an invaluable catalyst for international turbulence. It is, actually and potentially, the most disruptive element in the Western Alliance and has often created dangerous tensions between Washington and its European partners. It also has been used, quite successfully, to curb the pro-Western tendencies of some "moderate" Arab régimes.

To the unprincipled, pragmatic, and business-hungry European, the Palestinian imbroglio has offered a cheap vehicle for expressing pro-Arab sentiments. The fact that the European Community has neither the power nor the will to intervene effectively in the Middle East has not inhibited quixotic gestures like the Venice Declaration or the higher Cheyssonian flights of French musing. It would seem to be Europe's prerogative to exercise responsibility without power.

In the Arab countries and the wider Islamic world, the growing shadow of Moslem revivalism has further reinforced the fanaticism which has fed and encouraged the PLO for so many years.

Of course, we are not dealing here with a monolithic policy. The Arab world, like the PLO, is divided on tactics. Some favour the piecemeal dismantling of the Jewish State and are ready to accept what Dr Sullivan calls "the inevitability of a state consisting only of East Jerusalem, Gaza, and the West Bank. . . ." Others still clamour for the whole of Palestine. But there can be no doubt that all use the demand for an "Arab Palestine" as a magic carpet under which all the malpractices of their own rickety régimes can be swept.

Equally important for the autocratic rulers of the Gulf is their demonstrative support for the PLO. It is and remains the easiest form of reinsurance with their own restless radicals. It is also a symbolic commitment (reinforced by easy-come, easy-go petro-dollars) to the only matter in all the world on which the Arab nations seem to be in broad agreement.

Finally, an uncritical support for the PLO has become a central article of faith for the New Left and the *sine qua non* of a progressive posture. (See Annie Kriegel's brilliant new book, *Israel, est-il coupable?* recently published by Laffont in Paris.)

THE CONVERGENCE of so many otherwise mutually antagonistic forces is unique. It also bodes ill, I am afraid, for a rational political settlement of the Palestinian problem. Too many powerful forces have undeclared vested interests in preventing a settlement which would take into account not only the Palestinian claim for self-determination, but also Israel's right to secure borders and a peaceful and unmolested life inside its own territory.

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If a solution is to be discussed in realistic terms, it surely does not help to unearth the musty controversies of three decades ago. We may never know conclusively how many Arabs departed from Israel because they feared the fighting, and how many left because they were advised to do so by their local leaders. Does it really matter now?

Don't we know from so many other wars that when guns begin to blaze, people run away? If we do have to go back to the beginning, and the way it all started, why did the guns blaze in 1948? Because all the Arab neighbours of the Jewish State decided to defy the United Nations Resolution and invaded from all directions, intent upon its destruction. Israel survived only by defeating the aggressors. The rest followed. Historians tell us that most nations have come into their own, not because they have been right, but because they were victorious. The new frontiers of Europe after World War II were not exactly drawn on the basis of self-determination, and it is ironic that Europe should now expect others not to follow its instructive lessons.

So, WHERE DO WE go from here? I think that, inadvertently, Dr Sullivan has given us the answer. He concedes that during most of the period since 1948, no Arab State has had both the political stability and economic flexibility necessary to make the integration of Palestinians other *than an onerous and probably dangerous task indeed.* That being so, is it reasonable to expect Israel to accept an Arab state in its heartland, when it will not be able to control any of the dangers (and other onerous tasks) which Arab countries were afraid to take on?

All the same, as Dr Sullivan agrees, at least two-thirds of all the Palestinians displaced have gone on to create successful lives for themselves outside the refugee camps. Is there any reason why the rest cannot do the same, while observing the kind of patriotic nostalgia which they share, for instance, with millions of Poles in the USA and the many other victims of the great demographic migrations that followed World War II? In other words, for how long must these wretched people go on suffering for the sake of an elusive sovereignty? Having tried and tried and failed, has the time not come for seeking a solution on a more modest, humane, familiar level? I doubt whether the PLO and its supporters will permit the much-tried Palestinians to seek the satisfaction of personal achievement, as distinct from the deadly trials of a collective destiny. Who/whom? They think they are using "world forces"; they are being used.

I agree with Dr Sullivan that the strategic interests of the Western Alliance demand the termination of the Israel-Palestinian confrontation. This is a necessary condition, but it is not a sufficient one.

The necessary condition can only be achieved if it is clearly understood that the military control of the West Bank (or, at least, most of it) is essential to Israel's security. Its desert hills form natural strategic barriers against any attack from the East. The sufficient condition poses problems of a different magnitude. Notwithstanding the dismal collapse of the Shah's Iran—the West's main defensive pillar—NATO has not yet accepted the fact that we cannot defend the Middle East by proxy. Isn't it time, however, to ask ourselves one painful question? How can we hope to rely on Arab friends to defend our interests in the Middle East against Soviet encroachment, when they were not even able to offer some significant support to the Palestinians (in Lebanon) in their hour of need?

LIONEL BLOCH

London

"Irish Marxism"

Dublin

IN *this centenary of Marx's death, I offer the story about the Short and Harland shop stewards, and how they stood Marx on his head (thus reversing what Marx claimed to have done for Hegel).*

Those shop stewards were themselves Marxist, yet their circumstances constrained them to refute Marx, in action. They explained to me, one summer day in 1971, how they, in co-operation with management, contrived to keep sectarian violence off the shop floor.

WHEN THE sectarian temperature rose dangerously, for seasonal or other reasons, they would get management to introduce some new regulation or practice, certain to be obnoxious to all workers.

The shop stewards would then lead the agitation against the measure which they had secretly asked for.

Management would resist, and the mock struggle would continue until the sectarian dangerpoint was judged to be passed.

MARX TAUGHT *that national and sectarian conflicts were artificially created to distract attention from the reality of class conflict.*

Yet in this case class conflict was artificially created to distract attention from the reality of sectarian conflict.

Conor Cruise O'Brien
in the IRISH TIMES *(Dublin)*

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AUTHORS

Janette Turner Hospital (b. Melbourne, 1942) taught in Australian schools until her husband's researches took them to the United States, England, and South India; they now live in Kingston, Ontario. In 1974 she was awarded a Canada Council Doctoral Fellowship. Her first novel, *The Ivory Swing*, published by McClelland & Stewart in Canada and E. P. Dutton in the US, won the Seal Books First Novel Award; it is to be published in the UK by Hodder & Stoughton. Her short stories have appeared in *Atlantic Monthly* and other US and Canadian magazines.

Paul Henze is an author and diplomat who has specialised in Ethiopian and Turkish affairs. His articles appear regularly in the *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston). He was an assistant to Zbigniew Brzezinski on the US National Security Council Staff from 1977–80, during President Carter's Administration. Since then he has been a Wilson Fellow at the Smithsonian Institution, and is now a resident consultant at the RAND Corporation in Washington, D.C. He is currently working on a book about the plot against the Pope, which will be published later this year by Croom Helm.

Leszek Kolakowski was, until his expulsion from Poland in 1968, Professor of the History of Philosophy at the University of Warsaw. He is a Senior Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and has been visiting professor at the Universities of Montreal, Yale, California (Berkeley), and Chicago. His principal publications include *Chrétiens sans Eglise*, the three volumes of *Main Currents Of Marxism*, *Marxism and Beyond*, and *The Devil and Scripture*. Among his recent contributions to ENCOUNTER are "What is Living (& what is dead) in the Social-Democratic Idea?" (February 1982), "The Devil in History" (January 1981), and "How to be a Conservative-Liberal-Socialist" (October 1978).

Count Nikolai Tolstoy is the author of *Stalin's Secret War* (Cape, 1981), *Victims of Yalta* (Hodder 1978, Corgi 1979), and *Half-Mad Lord*, a biography of Thomas Pitt (Cape, 1978). Early in July Hamish Hamilton are to publish *The Tolstoys*, his history of the Tolstoy family from 1353 to the present day. Among his previous articles in ENCOUNTER are "The Diary of Nobody At All" (May 1982) and "'Victims of Yalta'—an Inquiry?" (June 1980). Of his article in this issue, he writes: "I am indebted for help on various points to the late Serena Booker, David Floyd, A. Hribar, R. Marcetic, Staniša R. Vlahovič, and Paun Vukovich."

Emmanuel Sivan is a member of the Institute for Advanced Study at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and currently at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton. He is Editor of *The Jerusalem Quarterly*.

Edward Pearce is a leader writer and Parliamentary sketch writer on the *Daily Telegraph* in London. His profiles of House of Commons personalities, *The Senate of Lilliput*, has just been published by Faber.

The interview with **Friedrich von Hayek** was conducted by **Wilfried Hertz-Eichenrode**, an editor of *Die Welt* (Bonn).

Robert Melville was for many years art correspondent for the *Architectural Review* and for the *New Statesman*. His books include *Henry Moore: Sculpture and Drawing* (Thames and Hudson, 1970), *Erotic Art of the West* (Weidenfeld, 1973), and other works on Picasso, Schiele, and Lucian Freud.

George Szirtes is Head of Art, St Christopher's, Letchworth. He has published a number of pieces about art and art education in *Quarto*, and also two books of poems, *The Slant Door* (which won the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Award) and *November and May* (both published by Secker & Warburg). His third book of poems, *Short Wave*, will be published by Secker & Warburg in November.

Alan Brownjohn's most recent book of poems is *A Night in the Gazebo* (1980). His *Collected Poems* will be published by Secker & Warburg later this year.

Richard Mayne, former head of the UK offices of the Commission of the European Communities, is a winner of the Scott-Moncrieff Prize (for his translation of Jean Monnet's Memoirs). His previous contributions to ENCOUNTER include "Adventure Playgrounds" (January 1982) and "The Binary Society" (June 1981). He edited *The New Atlantic Challenge* (Charles Knight, 1975); his *The Recovery of Europe* was published (by Weidenfeld and Harper & Row) in 1970, and *The Europeans* (Weidenfeld and Library Press, N.Y.) in 1972. *Postwar: The Dawn of Today's Europe 1945–57*, which will include his article on Masaryk, is published by Thames and Hudson on 9 May.

David Aberbach teaches at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. His article "On Rereading Bialik" appeared in the June 1981 issue of ENCOUNTER. He spent two years training as a child psychotherapist at the Tavistock Clinic in London, and has just completed a study of loss and separation in literature.

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Life & Letters Today

Essex

SEX IN ESSEX: **Police have been unable to find out who took a "girlie" magazine into a jury room during a sex case.**

At Chelmsford, Essex, Crown Court on Tuesday, Judge Brian Watling threatened to "deal with" the culprit and ordered the 12 jurors to be kept in their room while police interviewed them. The 47-year-old judge said: "This is the most scandalous piece of misconduct by a jury that I have ever come across."

But Detective Chief Inspector Peter Farrow said yesterday: "All the jurors have been exonerated. It has proved impossible to discover who placed the magazine in the jury room."

DAILY MAIL

London

ON A HIGH MOUNTAIN: The following is a notice in the *Catholic Herald*—

ST JAMES'S CHURCH, PICCADILLY.
KARL MARX AND THE BEATITUDES.

Four Lunchtime Sessions explore the connections and gaps between Christianity and Marxism. The Sessions will be led by Irene Brennan—Roman Catholic and Secretary of the Religious Affairs Advisory Committee of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

LINGUA FRANCA: **Urdu, Bengali, Arabic and Chinese should be taught in London classrooms, says the headmaster of London's newest comprehensive. Mr Michael Marland, of North Westminster School, has produced an outspoken report about how "other great world languages" could be offered alongside French and German. "If pupils are to be prepared to understand the multi-ethnic life they now face, is French enough?" he asks.**

THE NEW STANDARD

London

GAMESMANSHIP: *The meetings which take up more time than all the others put together are of course those of the European Economic Community [Samuel Brittan writes].*

The greatest problem is the risk that some British chairmen will really be impartial and have not yet learned the art of taking a broad Community view while ensuring that their own country gets the better of the deal. But Mrs Thatcher is unlikely to be amused by such foolishness and will expect her Ministers to learn very quickly that, behind the etiquette, no holds are barred in the Community game.

FINANCIAL TIMES

Montreux

PARODY: *It was a day of the most energetic protests. The Italian contribution in the grand competition for the "Golden Rose" was a TV film entitled "Paloscenico", and it included a song from Bert Brecht's "Saint Joan of the Stockyards"—the March of the Calves—which had been composed by Hanns Eisler as a parody of the Nazi "Horst Wessel Lied." It was sung, of course, in Italian.*

Leading the demonstrations of protest were the Dutch participants at the Montreux Festival who thought that what was being played was the **original** *and not the* **parody.** *That particular day happened to be their "Memorial Day for the Victims of Nazism." Few of the Festival participants or judges followed the RAI-programme in the original Italian; but there was a short German summary available. There it simply reported: "Horst-Wessel-Lied in der italienischen Fassung (Original text deutsch)." There was no reference to Brecht or Eisler.*

The protests and demonstrations followed.

FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

London

SOCKO: *Mr Tony Sever, aged 37, a computer systems consultant from Ealing, West London, yesterday won* "The Times *National Crossword Championship", completing four puzzles without a mistake in only 46 of his allotted 120 minutes.*

He said afterwards that he had been seriously stuck only once, on a four-letter clue, "Comedy hit." The answer was "sock", one dictionary definition of which is a light shoe worn by actors in ancient comedy.

THE TIMES

Westminster

PLUNDER BLUNDER: *In the debate on the Queen's Speech last week, Michael Foot invoked the memory of Marshal Blücher.*

The Leader of the Labour Party compared the Prime Minister's attitude towards the public sector with Blücher's, on surveying London from the top of the Monument:

"What a city to sack!"

Rather a good joke, except that Blücher said nothing of the sort. He did not use the word **plündern** *(plunder), but* **Plunder** *(rubbish).*

As he gazed out over the mean streets of London in 1814, he said:

"Was für Plunder (What a load of rubbish)! . . ."

Perhaps [Kenneth Rose writes] that is exactly what Mrs Thatcher does think of the nationalised industries.

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Seattle, Washington

"AMERICANISATION:" **Alan Hinton, one of the most successful British soccer men in the short and turbulent history of the game in North America, is the latest to find that the New Frontier is a hazardous place.**

He is out of work just four months after leading Seattle Sounders to the North American Soccer League's soccer bowl final.

Hinton is a victim of shrinking financial resources and a new perception that to survive professionally, clubs have to "Americanise."

The new owner of the club, a former gridiron football player called Bruce Anderson, even went so far as to announce that he was banning such "English" terms as "PITCH" and "THE LADS."

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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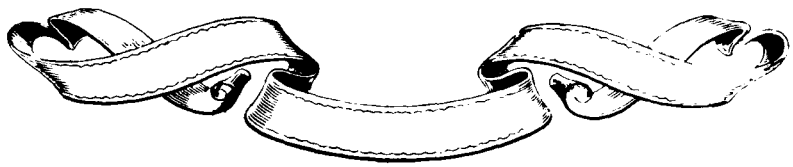

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